Valley Voice

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Who Filled In Mussel Slough?

Catherine Doe

An important draining basin and environmentally sensitive area on the west side of Hanford, a remnant of Mussel Slough, has mysteriously been filled in. Those responsible for filling in the slough have not yet been identified.

Robin Mattos, a founding member of the Hanford Environmental Awareness Team (HEAT), noticed a backhoe in the area in early May, while driving around Centennial Dr. and Millennial Way. On further inspection, she could see that a remnant of Mussel Slough had been completely filled in. She estimates the slough was filled in sometime between March and May.

This remnant of Mussel Slough, located close to Lowe's on West Lacy Blvd., was the subject of a contentious lawsuit in 2007. At that time, half of the remnant was slated to be filled with the construction of Lowe's. HEAT filed a lawsuit to force the developer to mitigate for the damages caused to the slough and to prevent the other half from experiencing the same fate.

As a result of the suit, the developer, David Paynter, of Paynter Realty and Investments, had to pay for all of HEAT'S legal fees, a scientific study about the slough and mitigation costs. Mitigation included extending Mussel Slough to make up for the part he filled in and creating a draining basin. Paynter also had to replant the riparian trees he removed. He was ordered to put $17,000 into an escrow account to ensure that the replanting was completed.

Mussel Slough is an intermittent waterway that branches off the Kings River and runs through Hanford to the Tulare Lake Basin. Since Kings River was dammed at Pine Flat, the slough only fills during wet years and also catches runoff, serving as a draining basin. When Mattos first reported that the remnant had been filled in during a Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, she tried to impart the seriousness of the community's loss. Mussel Slough, named for the bounty of mussels found in the waterway in the 1800's, was formed during the last glacial period and is still identified as a natural waterway.

"The slough has a purpose and should be treated with respect and not cemented over," Mattos said.

Mussel Slough after being filled in. Photo by Catherine Doe

The slough was not totally connected in the 1980's, but is a valuable asset used for water recharge. The slough also sustains riparian habitat and wildlife. Although the Kings River flows only four miles from Hanford, and People's Ditch

SLOUGH continued on **9 »**

Revised Stage 4 Schedule

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Odd	None	None	Tue Sat	Tue Sat	Tue Sat	Tue Sat	Tue Sat	Tue Sat	Tue Sat	Tue Sat	Tue Sat	None
Even	None	None	Wed Sun	Wed Sun	Wed Sun	Wed Sun	Wed Sun	Wed Sun	Wed Sun	Wed Sun	Wed Sun	None

Visalia Updates its Water Ordinance

Staff Reports

In response to the State Water Resource Control Board declaring that Visalia has to cut its water usage by 32 percent, Visalia updated their water ordinance at their June 15 meeting. The changes go into effect immediately.

Cal Water suggested that Visalia cut its watering days to twice a week for 12 months. This would result in a 22 percent reduction in water use. Combined with the new water budgets, Cal Water believes that Visalia can reach its goal of 32 percent reduction.

The city council decided to go one step further and completely eliminate the watering days for December, January and February. Cal Water had projected that eliminating those days in December, January and February would save Visalia one more percent in water use.

Visalia Medical Clinic to Get New Management

Dave Adalian

A proposed cooperative effort between the Visalia Medical Clinic and the Kaweah Delta Health Care District could soon help attract new physicians to the area, and give them incentive to remain here once they arrive.

Under the umbrella of the soon-to-be established Kaweah Delta Medical Foundation, VMC will become "a clear path to practice opportunities" for participants in the District's Graduate Medical Education program, said Lindsay Mann, CEO for KDHCD. The GME program trains new physicians in the KDHCD system, preparing them for ongoing education or in anticipation of establishing their own practice.

"The idea of the Medical Foundation, as we recruit physicians, is that we'll actually improve the capacity to serve the patients who seek out care," Mann said.

The expanded care, he predicts, will be more capable, and prove more convenient and accessible for patients.

The agreement should be inked sometime this fall, following action by the two organization's boards of directors this summer.

"We don't have a final date. We expect October or November, we'll start the Foundation," Mann said. "At this time, the leaders of Visalia Medical Clinic and Kaweah Delta are working on matters of due diligence and implementing planning, meaning we're getting to know each other."

Keeping Doctors Local

When the change takes place, VMC's medical staff will become a medical group organized under the Foundation's name. State law, Mann said, does not allow hospitals to employ doctors directly, but most prefer to have steady employment. The new medical group will provide that.

"Physicians in today's environment want to seek

VMC continued on **4 »**

Sports Complex Imminent, Housing In The Works at Tule River Reservation

Dave Adalian

At least two baseball diamonds will be ready for play at the Tule River Tribe's Hyder Ranch Sports Park before summer's end, and a new affordable housing project should soon be underway.

While tribal officials had hoped to have the new diamonds -- intended for adult use -- open before the end of June, it now seems unlikely, reports Tribal Administrator Victor Silva, Sr.

"I don't think it's going to be this month," he said of a project that's had to be vastly reworked since its conception.

Originally, the sports complex, which will cover some 22 acres when complete, was to be part of a much larger 54-unit housing development at Reservation Road and Road 296, just outside the Tule Indian Reservation east of Porterville. Water problems, however, stymied the project.

"The wells turned out to have high nitrates," said Bill Hayter, project advisor to the Tribal Council. "The cost of treating the well heads was too much."

Instead, just five houses will be constructed adjacent to the sports facility. Construction of those homes, a separate project from the sports complex, is already underway.

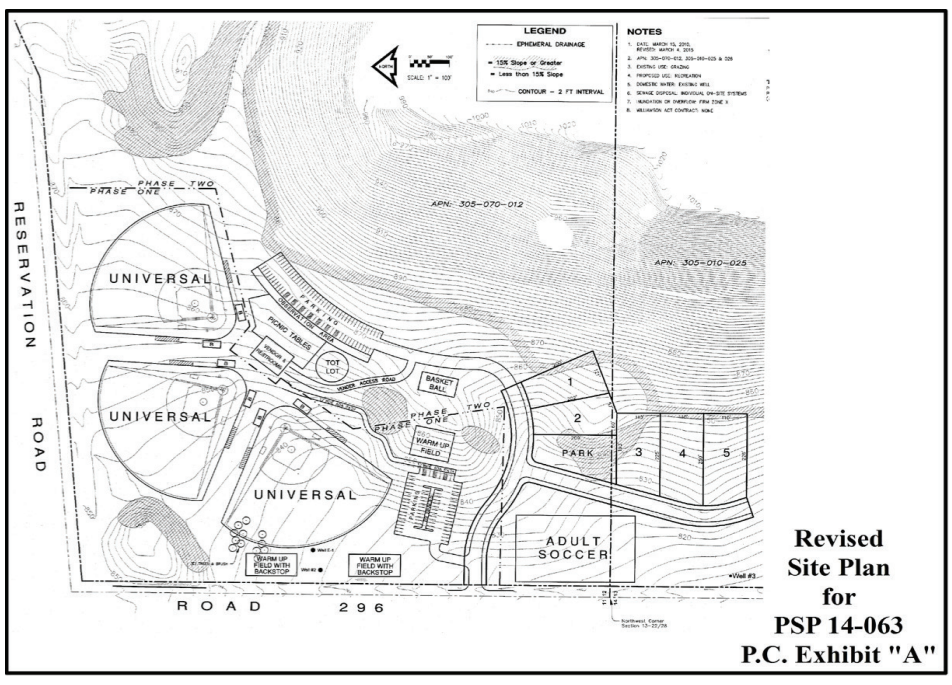
"They're doing housing pads down there right now," said Silva.

The rest of the Tribe-owned property at the site, more than 300 acres, will be used for grazing.

The ball diamonds used for adult league play on the Tule River Indian Reservation were lost when the land was turned to other uses, said Hayter, and residents have been anxious to have new ones constructed.

"The originals were wiped out when they built the casino," he said. "The push-

SPORTS COMPLEX continued on **4 »**



Revised Site Plan for PSP 14-063 P.C. Exhibit "A"

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Our Own Legerdemain

They say practice makes perfect. This isn't necessarily so. In all my years as a practicing Catholic I was never a perfect one, and am now in a lapse that has lasted 35 years.

To be clear, I'm not even a Christian anymore. But neither are those who ascribe natural or man-made phenomena to the wrath of God.

I seem to recall, from projections made several years ago, that the southwest region of the United States would grow ever more arid as climate change worked its magic on us. More properly--according to the majority of scientists--climate change is a phenomenon wrought by human hands: the current drought, therefore, may be of our own legerdemain.

Not if you ask California State Assemblywoman Shannon Grove, R-Bakersfield. In a recent speech at the California ProLife Legislative Banquet she suggested that the state's worst drought in 1,200 years may be divine retribution for California's providing women with access to abortions, RH Reality Check reported.

"Texas was in a long period of drought until Governor Perry signed the fetal pain bill," she told the audience. "It rained that night. Now God has His hold on California."

Wrong. Divine retribution and Christianity are incompatible. And while I'm fairly certain she'd protest to the contrary, Grove cannot be said to be a Christian. Here's why.

The Old Testament God, being wrathful and jealous, was capable of any manner of calamity. Nothing was too extreme, and His harshness could seemingly be arbitrary. An exterminating flood? Check. Turning a man's wife into a pillar of salt?

Well--she was told not to look back! How about betting with Satan over a righteous man's reaction to the many traumas inflicted upon him? Let 'em roll! God may have allowed the Devil to do the tormenting in Job's case, but did He not send ten plagues against Egypt, culminating in the casual offing of that country's first-born? The Almighty, in short, behaved like some drunken uncle one strives to avoid; indeed, this may be where we get the term "God-fearing."

But all this changed with the ghastly sacrifice of Jesus Christ. If Judaism, in the selection of a people, represents the notion of a covenant with God, Christianity advances this to embrace the idea of redemption. Of forgiveness. It is through our Savior that we are affirmed in the Lord, right? To think now that God would revert to Old Testament-style retribution is to deny Jesus His status as Christ and be at cross purposes with His crucifixion. And that's not very Christian.

I know: Neither is making a pun of His death.

What would be Christian would be to embrace the idea that climate change--whether engineered by humans or not—remains, at the end of the day, our responsibility to contend with because its first, and worst, effects will be upon the impoverished. Sadly, though, conservative disregard for the poor is well-known, and it has long been dogmatic for them that climate change is, in the best case scenario, unproven while being, at the worst, a hoax.

Still, it wouldn't hurt to assume its reality and work to rectify it--if indeed we can. Climate change will eventually impact everything on the planet. As I've said before, it may finally kill half of humanity off. But we can't just sit on our hands. Why not assume--like faith in God--that, in the absence of certainty, it is akin to insurance to believe it is happening? Nobody on his deathbed was ultimately discouraged by his faith; nobody, it is safe to say, will be harmed by a healthier Earth. How can someone believe in God but not believe in science?

God does not "have His hold on California." The drought is real; the Lord, I'll leave to you. If anything, I suspect He'd be disappointed in us for despoiling His masterpiece.

It is reasonable to believe not in the unseen, but in the demonstrated--climate change--and it is the responsible--Christian--thing to address it.

I may be a slob, a moron and a ridiculous degenerate, but even I can see the likelihood that climate change might have some hand--a "hold"--in the current drought. In fact, I suspect that, rather than some Old Testament retribution, we are all slowly hoisting ourselves on our own petard.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Fix

Catherine Doe

The Next Republican Governor

In the last issue of the *Valley Voice* I considered Tulare County Supervisor Allan Ishida the Republican sacrificial lamb to run for governor against the immensely popular Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom. But I forgot about Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin. She may not beat Mr. Newsom in 2016, but Democrats can't win forever, and she may come out on top after he terms out of office.

Ms. Swearengin did not win her bid for State Controller last November, but she did get her name known throughout the state. That momentum has not waned. She declared in the State of the City address, "the nation is buzzing about what we've accomplished," and Ms. Swearengin's name is becoming synonymous with Fresno's successes.

Ms. Swearengin shepherded Fresno through the worst economic times since the Great Depression. She has been instrumental in restoring lost services and was at the helm in revamping Fresno's general plan that focused on revitalizing neglected neighborhoods. Fresno has also seen a huge decline in its homeless population while Visalia and Hanford have experienced an increase.

On the subject of revitalization, it will be Ms. Swearengin's name that comes up when downtown Fresno comes back to life. She was an early advocate of High-Speed Rail, which will have a major hub in Fresno two blocks from downtown. In addition, construction is set to begin to return the pedestrian Fulton Mall back into Fulton Street.

According to *The Fresno Bee* Political Notebook, "*The Atlantic* magazine [section] called 'American Futures' chronicled Fresno's comeback. She highlighted a January Brookings Institution report that ranked the 300 fastest-growing metropolitan economies in the world. It found Fresno was the fourth-best job-creating region in the world from 2013 to 2014, with a 4.5% growth rate compared to 1.9% nationally. She said the real estate website Trulia.com put Fresno among its top 10 housing markets to watch in 2015."

Ms. Swearengin stated during her speech that she accepted *The Atlantic's* praise for her. She said the magazine "was right in assessing my role in the comeback of Fresno's downtown — the public champion for revitalization. When I'm finished serving as the mayor of Fresno, I want it to be said of me that I was willing to make any personal or political sacrifice, do whatever it took to turnaround our downtown and inner city."

It also may be said of Ms. Swearengin that she will be the first Republican Governor after 16 years.

Michelle Bachmann Kills the Iowa Straw Poll

Is it a coincidence that Michelle Bachmann was the last winner of Iowa's Straw Poll? On June 12, the Republican Central Committee of Iowa unanimously voted to cancel their straw poll in perpetuity, making her victory their last. Even Iowa's governor at the time said that the poll had outlived its usefulness.

In August of 2011, America woke up to a picture of a smiling Ms. Bachmann holding up an Iowan newspaper declaring her victory. The rest of the civilized world looked on in shock and, in all honesty, Ms. Bachmann looked a little shocked too. Not long after, her campaign folded and now it looks like she took the straw poll with her.

Until all the publicity started swirling around the straw poll, the average American saw the event as a precursor to the Iowa Caucus. Many people didn't realize that the event was actually a fundraiser for the Iowa Republican Party. Republican candidates were expected to bid for a spot to hold their barbeque and glad-hand voters, and that spot cost between $15,000 and $30,000. It was one of the state's biggest Republican fundraisers.

Some say it's a tradition that goes back to 1979. I don't think six straw polls and 1979 qualifies as a tradition. But even so, "traditionalists" claim that every candidate who came in first or second in the straw poll went on to win the Iowa Caucus. So what? The only person to win the Iowa Caucus and go on to win the presidency was George W.

Cracks in the tradition of the Iowa Straw Poll started this year when presidential hopefuls Jeb Bush, Mike Huckabee and Marco Rubio said they were going to skip the event. Surprisingly, Rick Santorum and South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham also said that they would not participate. This is surprising because the straw poll might have been their only ticket to the debate stage. They have such low poll numbers that neither of them will be able to participate in the Fox News presidential debate. Nor will they be at the adults' table during the CNN debate.

Jeb!

Sounds like Gov. Bush and Sen. Rubio are hankering to party like its 1959. Sen. Rubio wants the United States to go back to the days of shaming Cuba, and Gov. Bush wants to go back to the days of shaming unwed mothers. Gov. Bush has either been pining for the "good old days" or has been brushing up on his Quran.

In his 1995 book *Profiles in Character*, Gov. Bush stated that public shaming would be an effective way to regulate the "irresponsible behavior" of unwed mothers, misbehaving teenagers and welfare recipients. In a chapter called "The Restoration of Shame," Gov. Bush made the case that restoring the art of public humiliation could help prevent pregnancies "out of wedlock."

When asked by an MSNBC reporter if he still felt the same way now, Gov. Bush said, "My views have evolved over time, but my views about the importance of dads being involved in the lives of children hasn't changed at all," he said. "In fact, since 1995 … this book was a book about cultural indicators [and] the country has moved in the wrong direction. We have a 40-plus percent out-of-wedlock birth rate."

In Gov. Bush's official announcement that he is running for president, he declared that the Republican Party needs a bigger tent. I guess that tent doesn't include single mothers.

Has the country moved in the "wrong direction" because we don't parade unwed mothers through the middle of town and throw rotten fruit at them? Or could it be because 20 percent of college women are sexually assaulted and Republicans have successfully eliminated access to abortion services throughout the country? Could it be that so many African-American men have been incarcerated we have created an entire subculture of people who will never be hired and thus can't support a family? Could it be that any cognizant male knows that his minimum wage job will barely support his car, let alone a child?

Maybe, if like the good ol' days, a father could work hard and buy a house and send his child to college, the unwed birthrate would go back to what it was in the good ol' days.

The Donald Is In the Swim – and We Don't Mean the Duck

So what does a narcissistic, spoiled, reality TV star do when he gets bored of pissing on Rosie O'Donnell and Bill Maher? Run for president.

The Donald has threatened to run for president in 1987, 1999, 2004 and 2011, and has finally stopped just talking about it. In a speech that contained a strange mix of toxic aging and megalomania, Mr. Trump officially declared his candidacy for president of the United States on June 16.

After declaring that Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio "don't have a clue," he pronounced that he will bring America back.

Talking from his multi-million dollar Trump Towers he said, "The fact is, the American Dream is dead - but if I win, I will bring it back bigger and better and stronger than ever before."

How comforting that a person born with a silver spoon in his mouth has such a deep understanding of the American Dream, unlike Sen. Rubio, born of immigrant parents, who attended college on student loans.

Mr. Trump had previously billed himself as the "most successful person ever to run for the presidency, by far."

"I will be the greatest jobs president God ever created," he said.

Yet the issue he is most closely affiliated with over the last eight years has been President Obama's birth certificate. And how does he intend to be God's greatest gift to the unemployed? It's a secret – just like his plan to rid the world of ISIS. If he told anyone it would blow his cover. Meanwhile, the cradle of civilization is being pulverized and plundered and thousands of people are dying. But, you know, The Donald comes first.

The difficult question, for which the Republican Party needs to account, is why a character like Mr. Trump gets as high as 5 percent in some polls while Sen. Rick Santorum, who came in second four years ago, can barely break 2 percent, jeopardizing his place on the debate stage. One theory is that, politically, Mr. Trump is best known for being a Birther. There is a large swath of Americans who have never accepted the legitimacy of Mr. Obama's presidency. They cloak their racism by declaring that President Obama isn't a real American because he was born in Kenya. Mr. Trump panders to the racist element in the Republican Party and in the polls.

And Finally...

Are there any ladies out there who are just a little peeved that Bruce Jenner got all the privileges of being a man for 65 years and now gets all the bonuses of being a glamorous woman? In addition to all of his male privilege, he conveniently decides to transform to a woman at an age when almost all of his children's maternal obligations have been met and women are now experiencing their greatest freedom. That's awfully convenient.

Bruce Jenner says that he has a woman's brain and that they are different from a man's. I'll concede that men and women's brains are a little different. If not, my husband would actually be able to find my jar of fudge topping in the fridge. But the differences between men and women's brains are not genetic. The differences come from years of women being held under the dripping faucet of patronization. Women of my generation had brothers who weren't expected to do the dishes, who dated throughout high school and were handed over the keys to a car as they went off to college. Men in the family had more money, more material things, and more freedom--all while skipping through life without any mention of their weight.

While Mr. Jenner was going to college on an athletic scholarship, something not available to women at that time, I wonder how much he pined to be a twenty-something working mother who couldn't afford to go to college. Doesn't every man dream of being yelled at by his boss all day then coming home to scrub some toilets, change diapers and do the laundry? Throw in a couple of snide remarks about your home from the in-laws and I have just described the American Dream for our young women in the 1970's, and now.

As Mr. Jenner was crossing the finish line of the 1500 meter run in the 1976 Olympics to win the decathlon, was he really wishing he had a woman's body instead of the amazing specimen he was born? I don't think so, because he would not have been able to compete in the decathlon if he were a woman. They were not allowed to compete in that event.

Going through life, did Mr. Jenner always look in the back of his car before getting in? Always know if anyone was behind him or across the street while walking in public? After starting a family, did he organize the kitchen counters, finish loading the dishwasher, sign his children's paperwork for school, and fold some clothes all while en route between the family room and climbing into bed? No? Then I guarantee you he does not have a woman's brain.

In her interview with *Vanity Fair*, what Caitlyn Jenner is looking forward to most is being able to wear nail polish until it starts chipping off.

Really? The entirety of being a woman is painting her nails and then watching it chip off? I'd like to enlighten "Ms." Jenner what a woman's nails are for. They are for scraping off the crusted remains at the bottom of a pan because a man put it in the dish washer without scrubbing it out first. They are for picking the food out of the drain because the kids washed their dishes on the wrong side of the sink. Nails are for detangling

POLITICAL FIX continued on **7 »**

Commentary: Rural Crime Prevention Starts at the Home Ranch

John Osbourn

Crime in today's rural environment affects farmers and ranchers every day throughout the state.

As a cattleman and a peace officer, I see firsthand the impact that rural crime has on California farmers and ranchers as their equipment, livestock and crops are either stolen or damaged each year, resulting in untold losses to rural communities.

Local, state and regional governmental agencies are dedicating resources to mitigate rural crime effects and are looking at prevention measures. But where does rural crime prevention really start?

The California Farm Bureau Federation works on behalf of its members in a multitude of ways to facilitate and support rural crime prevention.

I am a member of the CFBF Rural Health and Safety Committee, which partners with the California Rural Crime Prevention Task Force, whose mission is to develop solutions to the unique crime problems that afflict citizens in rural areas throughout California.

The task force is made up of approximately 26 different law enforcement agencies, as well as district attorney's offices and regulatory agencies such as agricultural commissioners.

The task force strives to accomplish its mission by forging stronger alliances between itself and rural communities, by educating the public and focusing efforts on the prevention of crime in rural regions of California.

Agricultural crime investigators are hard at work each day across the state, making great cases and arrests.

However, criminal investigations are reactive in nature rather than preventive. Rural crime prevention truly begins with the alliances between rural law enforcement and rural communities. It starts on the home ranches and farms across this state.

As landowners and land stewards, we know our farms and ranches the best and are often in a position to observe suspicious activity and note criminal activity.

Prevention really begins when this information is shared with local law enforcement authorities, whether it is communicated to a deputy sheriff or the county's rural crime task force.

We, as farmers and ranchers, are encouraged to prevent rural crime in a few simple steps—with the most important step being reporting crimes as they occur.

Oftentimes, those of us in agriculture choose not to report a small crime, because we feel like nothing can be done. Farmers and ranchers need to be aware that their reports of thefts and other seemingly insignificant crimes greatly assist law enforcement with identifying crime trends and areas to target, and our report may be the final piece of the puzzle that breaks open a larger investigation.

Local crime analysts use these types of reports to establish crime trends and conduct crime mapping that can focus law enforcement resources to where and when rural crimes are occurring. Without the reporting data, law enforcement officers are left to find the needle in the haystack on their own.

Secondly, those in agriculture should get to know local law enforcement officers. Knowing the good men and women of the local law enforcement agency is just good business. The officers become more familiar with us, our farms or ranches and our operations, making it easier for law enforcement to spot suspicious activity. We get to know the folks who are protecting our farm or ranch, and establish the alliance necessary to prevent rural crime.

Contact your local law enforcement agency and inquire about rural crime. If you live in one of the 26 law enforcement jurisdictions that are task force members, chances are your local county Farm Bureau knows the rural crime investigators and can provide a point of contact.

Lastly, we can reduce the risk of crime by protecting our farm or ranch by securing equipment, gates, crops and outbuildings. Most thefts are crimes of opportunity, where equipment, gates or outbuildings are left unsecured for extended periods of time. We can protect our investment by closing and locking gates, parking and locking equipment near residences and roadways, and by securing outbuildings.

Applying an Owner Applied Number, or OAN, to equipment can also assist in the recovery of stolen agricultural items. To learn more about this step, take a few minutes and visit the task force website at www.crcptf.org or contact your local law enforcement agency. For additional resources on preventing rural crime, visit the CFBF website at www.cfbf.com, find the Programs menu at the top and click on "Rural Crime Prevention."

(John Osbourn is chief of police of the Yuba Community College District Police Department in Marysville and a Yuba County cattle rancher. He may be contacted at josbourn@yccd.edu.)

This article courtesy of the California Farm Bureau Federation.

Critter Camp Back This Summer at Valley Oak SPCA

Staff Reports

The Valley Oak SPCA Critter Camp returns this summer with a lot of puppy love, activities, crafts and guest speakers for children ages 5-12.

Critter Camp provides a lot of interactive time with puppies, kittens, cats and dogs, said Xiomari Rosado, program and volunteer coordinator for VOSPCA. But, it is also an educational environment for children to learn about pet care, local wildlife and more.

"There are some things they can learn and take home to share with their family," Rosado said.

These things will include dog safety, importance of vaccinations and general pet care.

Campers will also have the chance to see other types of exotic pets and wildlife, such as snakes, other reptiles, bugs and birds, and maybe have hands on with some of them too. They will learn about coyotes and raptors. There will also be arts and crafts time with animal-themes along with games and other activities.

The Camp has two age groups 5-7 and 8-12. Maximum Camp size is about 20, but if there are one or two more, they will try to make room, Mari said.

Last year there was only one week for the 5-7 age group, and much more demand. This year, there is a second week available.

Camp hours are Monday-Friday from 9am-Noon.

The dates for the 8-12 age group are July 6-10 and July 13-17.

The dates for the 5-7 age group are July 20-24 and July 27-31.

Registration is $85 per week; or $150 for two weeks. Registration includes daily snacks, a t-shirt and group photo.

Last year Rosado was asked to become program manager for the first Critter Camp, because she likes kids, she said. This year, she is very much looking forward to it again.

"I had so much fun last year," she said. "It's just fun, fun, fun!"

Registration forms may be picked up at the VOSPCA or are available online at www.vospca.org under events.

The VOSCPA is located at 29106 Highway 99, Visalia. For more information, call (559) 651-1111.

VMC

Continued from p. 1

employment or the equivalent," Mann said.

It will also provide physicians who are completing residence at Kaweah Delta with a reason to remain in the community.

"It's a huge part of this," said Mann. "The residency program is beginning its third year."

There are currently 58 physicians in the residency program at KDHCD. Their ranks will swell with two new residency programs, including a surgical residency, beginning July 1. The hospital is also expanding its residency programs for emergency room physicians, family medicine and psychiatry.

"We'll have up to 80 in the programs," Mann said. "It's projected we'll retain 50 percent of those. Imagine how much care 40 new doctors in the area could provide."

VMC Staff to Become Kaweah Delta Employees

The Foundation will also oversee approximately 200 non-medical staff at VMC, as well as leasing the VMC's facility at Akers Road and Hillsdale Avenue, and acquiring VMC's other assets. While the Foundation will take over the hiring of personnel and the day-to-day operations, it will continue to operate as the Visalia Medical Clinic.

"Visalia Medical Clinic staff will become Kaweah Delta staff," Mann said, "but they will be dedicated solely to the Medical Foundation."

Better, Easier Care

Besides drawing medical personnel to the area and helping keep them here, the cooperative effort should also provide for easier, better coordinated care for those treated at Kaweah Delta's in-patient facilities as they seek follow-up care with their physicians after discharge. The agreement will also help both entities prepare for upcoming changes in the way heath-care providers are paid, such as value-based purchasing, bundled payments and the capitated care agreements under which providers are paid on a per-patient basis.

The move is also intended to build confidence in local health-care providers while both preserving and expanding VMC and KDHCD's market share, Mann said.

Once the agreement to form the new foundation is final, the next step will be establishing a professional service agreement with the providers at VMC. Once this is done, operation of the facilities and employment of its non-medical personnel will be transferred to KDMF.

Sports Complex

Continued from p. 1

rate is to get two diamonds in tomorrow. They've been waiting a long time."

The wait is almost over. County officials require a final check of the construction site by a biologist in order to ensure there is no threat to the local ecosystem, then work can start.

"We're waiting for the biological report before we move any dirt," Hayter said. "Grating will take three weeks -- five weeks if we hit rock. From there, we go vertical."

Because of the ongoing drought, the diamonds will at first lack turf, and construction of most of the other amenities at the complex will go on for several years. Eventually, the complex will boast a trio of ball diamonds with bullpens and a warm-up area, a soccer field, a basketball court, a playground, park, two parking areas, food vending and a picnic area. The first phase of construction will include the diamonds, access roads and parking.

Meanwhile, other plans for a replacement housing project are in the works.

"Two hundred and fifteen housing units are needed today," said Hayter. "We're trying to come up with housing that's cost-effective and affordable for the Tribe."

The location they've selected, one with plenty of drinkable water, is a large parcel adjacent to the Tribe's existing land.

"There's plenty of room for housing on the Lower Ranch Property," Hayter said.

The process of extending the boundaries of the Reservation to include the Lower Ranch Property is already underway, Hayter said. The Bureau of Indian Affairs should approve the addition of the land into federal trust after the 30-day

Nine Goshen Families Achieve Dream of Owning a Home

Staff Reports

On June 12 Self-Help Enterprises officially recognized and welcomed nine Goshen families who have completed the construction of their own home. These hardworking families have spent the last nine months helping each other build their new, safe, affordable homes.

Self-Help Enterprises operates the largest mutual self-help homeownership program in the country. Since 1965, Self-Help Enterprises has helped more than 6,100 families in the San Joaquin Valley build their own homes and participate in the American dream of homeownership. The single-family homes are all built under the mutual self-help method of construction with homeowners providing over 70 percent of the construction labor. These labor hours, or "sweat equity", are used as the down payment on their new home that, together with low-interest mortgage financing through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, reduces the costs for a new home they otherwise could not afford.

Self-Help Enterprises' emphasis on sustainable homeownership, combining counseling and education, an affordable mortgage, and the sweat equity down payment, has resulted in successful homeownership for thousands of Valley families. Families not only build their homes and those of their neighbors, they also build an instant community, a sense of place, and skills that will last a lifetime.

The completion of the latest nine homes brings a total of 122 homes to Goshen since the first self-help houses were constructed in Goshen in 1963. The construction of the nine homes also marks the completion of the first subdivision with 77 homes on land donated to Self-Help Enterprises by the Doe family, long-time supporters of Self-Help Enterprises who desired to contribute to the future of families and children in Goshen. The donated 40-acre land also includes the 10-acre Peter Malloch Park and the 56 unit Goshen Village II apartment rental community – both developed by Self-Help Enterprises.

For more information about Self-Help Enterprises, visit SelfHelpEnterprises.org.

Urban Farmers for Food Freedom is Born

Catherine Doe

Out of the ashes of the June 1 Visalia City Council meeting was born Urban Farmers for Food Freedom (UFFF). After three members of the city council voted down an ordinance allowing chickens in residential zones, the pro-goat and chicken constituents joined forces. Their goal is to legalize small food-producing farm animals inside the city limits. The group has begun the initiative process and has just formed a Political Action Committee.

Council members Amy Shuklian and Warren Gubler voted in favor of changing the ordinance to include chickens, but none of the council members were willing to put the goat issue on the agenda.

The Urban Farmers for Food Freedom are in the process of refining the wording of the initiative. According to the Sarsfield and Melo Law firm, it is projected to take two to three weeks to get the first draft of the initiative completed and submitted to the city clerk.

The city attorney assembles a ballot title and summary of the proposed law. The UFFF is ready to obtain the initial signatures and circulate the proposed law in a newspaper. The group has 180 days to get the required number of signatures. The exact number is still being researched but is approximately 10 percent of Visalia's registered voters. If everything goes according to plan UFFF hopes to have a launching date of the Fourth of July to start collecting signatures.

It is still unclear whether the initiative will be on the June, 2016 primary ballot or the November general election ballot.

Sarsfield and Melo Law firm is working pro bono, helping the UFFF with the wording of the initiative and the paperwork. The law firm was also instrumental in forming the UFFF PAC.

"We believe in the right of Americans to provide for their families without interference from the government." said Maggie Melo.

A few details of the initiative have been agreed upon by the members of UFFF. Each food-producing animal will have square footage requirements and an enclosure; such as the chickens will have to have coops and the miniature goats will have to have pens. There will be a 60-pound limit for each farm animal. All of the animals included as food-producing must abide by pre-existing ordinances that pertain to household pets. These include unlawful trespass, health, noise and nuisance. Food-producing animals will not count against household pet limits. Roosters, peafowl and unneutered male mini goats will not be allowed.

According to Visalia resident Gingi Freeman, "An initiative is a means by which a petition signed by a certain minimum number of registered voters can force a public vote. But one thing is for sure, we're confident we'll get this on the ballot, and once this decision is put to the people and not to career politicians engaged in class warfare (civilized people just don't live among chickens and goats, you see) we will have a huge victory for food freedom in Visalia."

All donations to help cover legal expenses can now be mailed in to UFFF PAC at:

Urban Farmers for Food Freedom
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There's More to the Pollinator Story than Neonics

Joel Nelsen, California Citrus Mutual

The White House Task Force on Pollinator Health recently released its long-awaited strategy to improve the health and continuing viability of pollinators. There is much to applaud in the document, particularly its recognition that pollinator health is a complex multifactorial problem requiring a many-pronged response.

The strategy commits significant federal resources to improve bee forage and habitat. It tells the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to accelerate registration of new pesticide formulations to combat the deadly Varroa mite, which most scientists agree is a primary cause of declining bee health today. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will oversee research into developing bees with genetic resistance to the mite, a distant solution at best. All of this is necessary.

However, the strategy omits some salient points. Not nearly enough attention is paid to the problems created by the growing number of "backyard" or hobby beekeepers. Pest and diseases don't discriminate between hosts. Proper management is critical in both commercial and hobby beekeeping operations for the health of bee populations at large. The strategy also ignores the massive amount of stress imposed upon hives as they are transported thousands of miles to pollinate crops across the country as a means to maximize economic potential.

Most importantly, the strategy unduly emphasizes neonicotinoids – neonics for short – a class of pesticides that activists have been campaigning against for years now. In fact, when the USDA and EPA issued a joint scientific report three years ago citing multiple potential causes for declining bee health, activists were outraged that not enough focus was placed on pesticides. Their disappointment led "to the need" for a federal government working group and a nationwide strategy to address the issue. Guess what? The conclusion remains the same.

Nevertheless, inserted in the new strategy document is an entire section dedicated to the potential impacts of neonics on bee health. There is nothing wrong with re-reviewing science as we learn more. There is nothing wrong with a re-registration process to analyze a material. We have a law that mandates that to occur.

But neonics are judged guilty based on emotion, and therefore are the highlighted focus. Simply ignore the fact that all pesticides can kill bees and just focus on one material. Ignore the safe approach used by farmers when applying pesticides to protect beneficial insects, including bees.

Ignore the fact that neonics are the primary tool for defending the health of the U.S. Citrus industry as it battles against Huanglongbing, or HLB, a plant disease that has destroyed millions of trees in Florida, Texas, Mexico and Brazil leaving behind fallowed fields where once stood vibrant citrus groves.

It is interesting that USDA statistics show that the number of hives in the U.S. has increased in the past several years. It is interesting that neonics have been banned in Europe for two seasons, yet colony collapse continues. It is interesting that neonics are used in Australia, but colony collapse does not exist there.

Former Florida Congressman and now Florida Ag Commissioner Adam Putnam recently touted the State's success in creating a program that has resulted in a thriving bee industry and a growing number of registered hives, while the farming industry there continues to use neonics.

These facts should be incorporated into the dialogue to counteract the emotion that has carried the argument against neonics. One of the most important facts to consider is that, despite the claims of activists, there is no "beepocalypse." As the White House report itself illustrates, bee populations in U.S. have been steady since the mid-1990, ironically about the time when neonics first came on the market.

The citrus industry, however, is facing a real crisis. HLB, sometimes called citrus greening, is spread by an invasive insect called Asian citrus psyllid that is now endemic in Florida and spreading quickly throughout California. There is no cure for HLB once a tree becomes infected, and neonics are the only tool proven effective in preventing infection.

Activists will continue to press USDA, EPA and Congress to achieve their objective of a complete ban of neonics. But, doing so would put the citrus industry at grave risk and, as existing science shows, would not actually improve bee health.

Photograph: Sean McCann, UF/IFAS Honey Bee Research and Extension Laboratory.

Members of Congress from agricultural states need to take a close look at the White House strategy and follow the issue closely. The activist agenda is driving EPA toward restricting a material that many agricultural commodities depend on for survival. The economic impact would be tremendous should EPA concede to their emotionally driven, pseudo-scientific anti-pesticide claims. Congress should use its powers to ensure EPA is acting based on science and not caving to the whims of special interest groups.

Joel Nelsen is the president and CEO of California Citrus Mutual.

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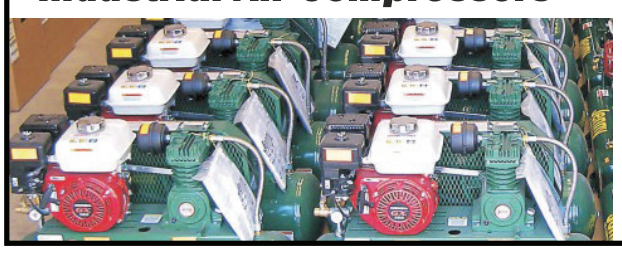

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Westlands Urges Reclamation to Comply With ESA

Today, Westlands Water District, along with the San Luis Delta-Mendota Water Authority, sent to the Department of the Interior a Notice of Violation of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), which asserts that the Bureau of Reclamation's action to release additional water from Trinity Reservoir to the Trinity River in August and September of 2014, violated the ESA. Specifically, Reclamation's failure to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), an agency within the Department of Commerce, regarding the potential effects on winter-run Chinook salmon of reoperating Trinity Reservoir violated section 7 of the ESA.

In December 2000, former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt signed a record of decision that prescribed flow criteria for the Trinity River. These criteria were established to meet federal trust responsibilities to Native Americans and to meet the fishery restoration goals of federal law, and according to Interior the flow criteria were based on "extensive scientific effort to determine appropriate flows and other measures necessary to restore and maintain the Trinity River's anadromous fishery." These criteria were meant to be "permanent" and the record of decision signed by Secretary Babbitt provided that the annual flow volumes "may not be changed." Moreover, in adopting theses flow criteria, Interior rejected alternatives that would have resulted in higher flow volumes because those higher flows would "exclude or excessively limit [Reclamation's] ability to address the other recognized purposes of the [Trinity River Division]," including providing cold water for salmon in the Sacramento River and supplying water to farmers.

Despite language in the record of decision that annual flow volumes "may not be changed," in 2012, 2013, and 2014, Reclamation did change the annual flow volumes without regard for the effects those changes would have on the winter-run Chinook salmon and other species listed under the ESA. Under intense political pressure, Reclamation increased releases down the Trinity River in 2012, 2013, and 2014, by an additional 120,000 acre-feet. But the release of that additional water down the Trinity River impaired Reclamation's ability to maintain cool water temperatures for the benefit of endangered winter-run Chinook salmon and threatened spring-run Chinook salmon in the Sacramento River. Indeed, in the fall of 2014, excessive water temperatures in the Sacramento River significantly increased the mortality of salmon eggs and fry. Presently, the State Water Resources Control Board is considering additional restrictions on the operations of Shasta Reservoir to protect cold water temperatures, which could further diminish Central Valley Project water supplies for farms and cities. The need for these potential restrictions would have been ameliorated, at least in part, had Reclamation not released the additional 120,000 acre-feet of water from Trinity Reservoir over the past three years.

Notwithstanding these adverse consequences on listed species, Reclamation has already been asked to make additional releases from Trinity Reservoir again in 2015. In each of the past years, Westlands has warned of the potential adverse consequences for endangered fish in the Sacramento River, and has urged Reclamation to avoid any further additional releases for salmon in the lower Klamath River until it has first completed consultation under the ESA.

In the Notice issued today, Westlands and the Authority again urge Reclamation to fulfill its duty to consult regarding the impacts of these releases on listed fish species. In a year where homeowners, farmers, and communities are being asked to make responsible decisions relative to their water use, we ask the government to do the same.

Water Tops List of Environmental Issues

Christine Souza, CFBF

Concerns about current and future water supplies were a unifying theme as Farm Bureau staff members from across the nation gathered in Sacramento last week to discuss environmental issues affecting American farmers and ranchers.

The American Farm Bureau Federation Environmental Issues Conference brought representatives from at least 20 states together, to discuss a range of topics including water quality, air quality, endangered-species rules and other regulations affecting family farmers and ranchers. But with the conference setting in California's capital, discussion of water supplies often rose to the fore.

In welcoming the group to Sacramento, California Farm Bureau Federation President Paul Wenger provided an update about the state's already stretched water supply and the regulatory and legislative impacts that have resulted from the drought.

"There is a mindset in California that we can conserve our way out of this. There is no way that I've ever seen that you can divvy up a dollar and make two dollars. You have to go bring in more water," Wenger said. "Three years ago, in May of 2012, all of our reservoirs were full to the brim. We should not be where we are today. The challenges are real, they are drastic, but we have to adapt to the challenges that we have."

CFBF Administrator Rich Matteis discussed how the state Legislature and voters responded to the drought last year, including by adopting statewide groundwater legislation and passing a bond measure that would set aside $2.7 billion to construct additional water storage. This year, he said, Gov. Brown's order for mandatory cuts in urban water use resulted in a renewed focus on agricultural water.

"Certainly, the drought has caused a lot of attention to what we do and how we do it," he said, noting that Farm Bureau has responded through both one-on-one interactions with elected officials and regulators, and through the news media.

Joe Cain, commodity division director for the Kentucky Farm Bureau, reported that water issues are

WATER continued on **8** »

Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

the thread while mending your kids and husband's clothes or picking a thorn out of a child's foot.

Now that I am done bitching, I will concede the fact that it's not Ms. Jenner's fault how women are treated. Nor is it her fault that that she was a born in a man's body. So my final gripe is not that her "coming out" photo evokes the idealized body, hair and face of a 1950's female who never really existed. My biggest gripe is that the first time *Vanity Fair* put a 65-year-old woman on its cover she has a dick.

Welcome to the world of being a woman, Ms. Jenner. Now can you clean my toilet?

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Water

Continued from p. 1

becoming more of a factor in his state.

"Kentucky is getting very engaged in water issues. We don't have water (supply) problems, but we want to be proactive," Cain said, adding that Kentucky Farm Bureau President Mark Haney established a Water Management Working Group that is meeting to develop a strategy on dealing with water.

Kentucky receives about 45 inches of rainfall annually and has several aquifers that feed into the state, which provide plenty of surface water, Cain said, but the Farm Bureau has taken a renewed interest in water issues, as many farmers make a transition from on-farm water sources to municipal water.

"We feel like if there is a drought, we will have some issues. We are working on a more effective drought mitigation plan and have some strategies that will be announced this fall," Cain said.

Cain's Farm Bureau neighbor to the east, Wilmer Stoneman, who handles government regulations at the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, reported the organization is also looking into water as the state studies groundwater and "drastically low" aquifers.

During the conference, the CFBF team of environmental attorneys briefed fellow state Farm Bureau representatives on issues related to land use and property rights, the California water rights system, water quality regulation and the regulation of irrigated agriculture.

In talking about the future of farming in California, CFBF environmental attorney Chris Scheuring said, "In California, our protection of land through voluntary, incentive-based means for the most part is going to be successful, but land is only half of the equation. The other half of the equation is water."

Speaking to a group of state Farm Bureau professionals who specialize in environmental issues, Jon Munger, right center, vice president of operations for Montna Farms in Sutter County and president of the Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau, discusses water, wildlife and regulatory issues that affect California rice growers. Photo/Christine Souza

As part of the conference, CFBF environmental policy analyst Justin Fredrickson led a tour for Farm Bureau staff members that included the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation C.W. "Bill" Jones Pumping Plant in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the nearby Tracy Fish Collection Facility, which intercepts migrating fish before they enter the delta water pumps.

The group also visited Montna Farms in Sutter County, to see how California rice fields provide habitat for at least 230 different species of birds each year.

The AFBF Environmental Issues Conference attracted Farm Bureau staff members from as far away as New Jersey, Kentucky and Florida, and from states as diverse as Michigan, Texas and Wyoming.

"It really is a way for our professional regulatory staffers to get together and learn from one another, to put best practices into place and to gain information from one another that allows us to do our jobs better," said Don Parrish, AFBF senior director of regulatory relations. "And when we do our jobs better, our members benefit."

This article courtesy the California Farm Bureau Federation.

California Ag Bank Names Agricultural Real Estate Specialist As New Vice-Chairman

Suncrest Bank has announced the appointment of Marc Schuil to the position of Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bank.

Schuil has served as a director since the Bank was formed in 2008 and as board secretary since 2013.

Together with his brothers, Michael and Rick, Schuil owns and operates a highly successful diversified real estate company, Schuil & Associates.

The company, which was founded in 1983, specializes in the agricultural sector with a particular focus on the dairy industry, and farming in nuts, citrus, vines, tree fruit and row crops.

"Marc's appointment not only reflects the contribution he has made to the development of the bank but also the expertise he brings in terms of the local ag industry and the quality and value of farmland in the Valley" said Board Chairman Bill Benneyan. "As one of very few ag banks in the entire State of California, Marc's experience is invaluable to us."

Slough

Continued from p. 1

runs right through town, the city has no surface water rights. Hanford relies solely on ground water for its municipal water supply. This means the city needs waterways like Mussel Slough to filter the water and have it percolate down to the aquifer.

The slough has always been considered a valuable community resource, but has been difficult to monitor. Monitoring of the slough has fallen under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). As the city grows, parts of the slough have become victim of errant farmers or developers who have historically filled it in, hoping it would go unnoticed. Most local farmers are mystified why someone would fill in the slough.

Referring to its value, one farmer said, "Don't they understand how important it is?"

Hanford's 2002 General Plan states in its Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element that the city desires to "maintain slough remnants and watercourses within the Hanford Planning Area as components of storm drainage retention program and a possible recreational trail system. Public access within sensitive habitat areas of the sloughs or waterways shall be considered individually to ensure protection of the habitat resource."

The Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element goes on to say that, "where appropriate and feasible, establish permanent mechanisms to protect wetlands and riparian corridors, The City shall preserve natural watercourses, wetlands and riparian corridors through requirements of land dedication and open space improvement imposed during the land development process."

The 2007 lawsuit was, in part, trying to get the city to enforce its own General Plan. The lawsuit also created three legal documents that should have ensured the second half of the Mussel Slough would not be filled in. First, there was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Hanford and HEAT. The MOU stated that the city would immediately inform HEAT of any future development in the area west of Centennial Dr., where the section of the slough is located. The intent of the document was to preserve the slough, not just notification.

A second legal document was signed between Paynter and the CDFW. Sloughs are the jurisdiction of the CDFW, and any alteration of a slough needs its prior approval. The agreement says, "The Operator (Paynter) may not commence any activity that is subject to Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq. until the Department has found that such Project will not substantially adversely affect an existing fish or wildlife resource."

The MOU supports the Fish and Wildlife Agreement by saying, "the parties agree that the CDFG Stream Alteration Agreement No. 2007-0081-R4 is a contract in which David Paynter has agreed to the jurisdiction of the CDFG over the Mussel Slough natural channel included in SAA No. 2007-0081-R4 and the City agrees not to object to, and waives any future objection to SAA No. 2007-0081-R4 (Mussel Slough-Kings County), and City agrees to continue irrigation and maintenance of the habitat referred to in SA 2007-0081-R4 at a level consistent with the performance of Paynter under the SAA."

Mussel Slough in 2007

A third legal document born from the suit was a Settlement Agreement between Paynter and HEAT. The settlement outlined the legal fees and biologist fees to be paid by the developer to HEAT. The Settlement also outlined CDGF's role in monitoring how Paynter was going to mitigate for filling in half of the Mussel Slough remnant in order to build Lowe's.

HEAT and the Hanford community were lead to believe that the MOU, Settlement Agreement and Agreement between Paynter and the CDFW would stop any further filling of Mussel Slough. The Mussel Slough was filled nevertheless.

An exasperated Mattos said, "We aren't a bunch of tree huggers. We just want a place for the water to drain and some open space."

Is There a Connection to Bajun American Properties?

On February 27, 2015, a site plan review was submitted for a future apartment complex that will sit right on top of a section of Mussel Slough filled in by David Paynter eight years ago. Sometime between March and May of this year the remainder of the slough was filled in. Bajun American Properties is the developer behind the projected apartment complex.

Hanford resident John Zumwalt filled out the site plan review application as an agent of Bajun American Properties. Zumwalt was also the consultant for Paynter Realty and Investments in 2007, when Paynter was building Lowe's. He was also the consultant for the developers of Target and Wal-Mart. Going against civic conventional wisdom, Zumwalt is also an advisor for the Citizens Advisory Committee as they wade through the General Plan Update. This is a position that would not be allowed in other cities due to conflict of interest.

Bajun American Properties is proposing to build a two-storey, 216-unit complex on the corner of Centennial Dr. and Millennium Way. The empty land is zoned as medium density residential. The Community Development Department came to the conclusion that the apartment building would not have an adverse impact on the environment and prepared a negative declaration. A negative declaration is prepared when a city doesn't feel it is necessary to complete a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR.) Despite protestations from the community, the negative declaration was approved on June 1.

HEAT intends to appeal the city's decision. Darlene Mata, community development director of Hanford, says that their request to appeal came in one day late and rejected the appeal.

It is HEAT's position that an EIR must be done before the complex is built, especially in light of the fact that someone made the unilateral decision to erase the Mussel Slough remnant. According to Andy Mattos, also a founding member of HEAT, any complex larger than 100 units has to go through an EIR. He also found in Hanford's city code that HEAT actually had 14 days to file an appeal, not 10 as stated by Mata.

A letter from HEAT's lawyer, Richard Harriman, outlines additional reasons why it is not legally appropriate for the city to approve a negative declaration for the Bajun American Properties apartment complex. He reminded Mata that the negative declaration is in violation of the MOU signed between the city and HEAT in 2007. As described above, the MOU stated that not only should HEAT have been notified that a site review plan application had been submitted, but that any development inside the litigated area must go through the EIR process. Mata was not the community developer in 2007 when the MOU was signed.

The appeal is still being reviewed by HEAT's lawyer. If the appeal is rejected HEAT intends on suing to force the city to complete an EIR.

A Healthy Community

Mattos emphasized that HEAT is not anti-development.

"My family lives here," she said. "My agenda is to advocate to make this a community that people want to live in."

That includes steady economic development. But HEAT seeks a fair and equitable exchange between loss of use of land, natural resources and development. "It's not a new concept. HEAT's agenda is to advocate for developments to invest in the people that live, attend school, work and retire here," Mattos said.

In Harriman's letter to the City of Hanford, he points out the dismal lack of park space available to Hanford residents. This is even more ironic given the fact that Hanford is an agricultural community where open space is cherished. The Hanford Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master plan states that a community should have 6.5 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1000 people. According to Mata's response to Harriman's letter, Hanford only has 3.1 acres per 1000 people. That 3.1 acres includes the undeveloped portion of Happy Valley Park that has survived several chops on the seller's block. If the undeveloped half of Happy Valley Park is sold, the per acre, per person ratio would be even more unacceptable.

Coincidently, Mussel Slough has a beautiful remnant in the middle of Happy Valley Park. Parts of Mussel Slough, as recently as the 1980s, meandered through the community of Hanford from Happy Valley Park to the proposed Bajun American Properties apartment complex.

In Visalia, the city council has encouraged connecting commercial developments with parks and residential areas. A bicyclist can ride from Cutler Park outside of Visalia along St. Johns River Parkway, through a residential area, and then to Orchard Walk East to shop at Target or get a coffee at Starbucks. The cyclist can proceed to Riverway Sports Park, where his children can play or they can watch a soccer game.

HEAT also supports creating walking and bike trails to connect residential and commercial zones throughout Hanford. A bike path meandering along the tree-lined banks of Mussel Slough from Happy Valley Park to Hanford's Target could have attracted shoppers from all around the Valley, and would have been a boon to developers and the community.

"An investment in our community by a builder or developer creates a partnership. If we are safe and healthy because our partners invested in us, we are likely to invest in our partners. There's a quid pro quo of job creation, recreation, a safe place to live and retire, access to higher education, and the developer's project being a successful investment," said Mattos.

Fall Opening Planned for London Library

Mary Lou Aguirre

A library for the rural community of London is not just a win for the tiny community, but for its Valley neighbors as well, says its founder.

Robert Isquierdo Jr., who grew up in London, is the driving force behind the "Library for London" project which has gone from dream to reality thanks to support from throughout the Valley.

The library will be completed this fall, in time for the start of the school year.

The good news coming out of London has benefited the community in other ways, Isquierdo said.

"Over the past three months London has had more positive media exposure than any other time in the history of the community's existence," Isquierdo said. "This is a special time for us because this exposure is drawing attention to the many issues that need to be addressed that London has struggled with for decades."

Those struggles, the English teacher said, are lack of educational resources and the lack of medical and health services.

Local community newspapers and television stations have reported on the progress of the library and fundraisers.

Isquierdo, who posts updates on Facebook, recently added the news that Fresno native and children's book author and poet Gary Soto will do a reading during the library's grand opening.

Soto's books include "A Fire in my Hands," [poems], "Chato's Kitchen" and "Baseball in April."

His books have sold more than 4 million copies.

His website, www.garysoto.com, offers this quote: "You can always spot bright people. They are reading a book."

"Gary is someone I had always admired since I heard him speak at my community college, Allan Hancock in Santa Maria in 1993," Isquierdo said.

Isquierdo remained in touch with Soto as he began the "Library for London" project.

"Every city and town needs a library, and now it's London's turn," Soto said in an email. "I expect only a deeper appreciation of literature to come out of this project, which as we know began with a vision and soon become real. I can already see children and youth turning the pages of books."

Soto has also contributed financially.

"Gary donated $2,000 to our cause and even asked some of his friends to support our cause," Isquierdo said. "As a Central Valley product, he has been a huge supporter from day one."

Residents from neighboring communities such as Kingsburg and Dinuba, have provided support as well, Isquierdo said.

London native Robert Isquierdo Jr., left, has spearheaded an effort to bring a library to his rural hometown. He's shown symbolically throwing out old reputations as the town rebuilds new ones during the first annual Library for London race event.

"I would say that in order to truly address the ills of society we must understand the connection between all our valley communities, especially those within close proximity to our own community," he said. "If London struggles, we are all affected by it directly or indirectly. Any law enforcement officer or sociologist can attest to that."

The London/Kingsburg connection wasn't always positive, he adds.

'The London of the past did affect Kingsburg by providing Kingsburg residents who chose to participate in recreational drug use a close, convenient place to buy their narcotics," Isquierdo said. "If we help to improve our neighboring communities we are actually helping to improve our own community."

"Adults from different communities, Isquierdo said, can lead by example," he said. "London is a great opportunity to teach our future generations of Kingsburg and Dinuba residents how to reach out to those beyond our own communities. Life was not designed to live within our own comfortable, private bubble. In order to truly grow as individuals who must look beyond our own circumstances and communities for opportunities to assist others in need."

Isquierdo said there are plans to offer several summer events in London. Details will be posted at the library website, www.libraryforlondon.com.

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Visalia Hosts Senior Games

Compiled by Catherine Doe

It's time or Visalia to start planning the Inaugural 2015 Visalia Senior Games. Senior Games are taking the sporting world by storm at the local, state, national and world competition levels and will be coming to Visalia this fall. The first Visalia Senior Games Planning Task Force meeting was held on June 17 at the Visalia Senior Center. Planning is being spearheaded by the Parks & Recreation Department. The games are scheduled to take place October 21 through the 25.

Senior Games is open to those ages 50 and better and with 11 age divisions for men and women in each event, it's certain there will be a lot of winners. The National Senior Games Association (NSGA) has 19 events and, to be included in the NSGA, the hosting city must offer at least half of the NSGA's approved sports by the third year of hosting Senior Games. Visalia plans to hold eight events this October, with the goal of offering ten sports in 2016.

Of the nineteen events through NSGA, Visalia plans to kick off the inaugural event with: Archery, Bowling, Golf, Horseshoes, Pickleball (singles, doubles, mixed doubles,) Tennis (singles, doubles,) 5K Road Race, and Table Tennis (singles, doubles.)

"We've selected events that we feel appeal to the 50+ community and are at the heart of Senior Games," said Jeannie Greenwood, Recreation Manager for the City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department. "We have City-owned facilities that will host most of the events, the events are programs that we already offer and know are popular in the Central Valley and they are events we have the expertise to facilitate."

According to the Visalia Times-Delta, "The golf competitions likely will take place at the Valley Oak Golf Course in Visalia, while table tennis is expected to be played at the Visalia Senior Center and bowling at the AMF Visalia Lanes, Greenwood said. She said the city is looking at developing an archery program at Riverway Sports Park, but it's not clear if the Senior Games' archery competition might be held there or at another Visalia locale or city in Tulare County. And even though the city of Visalia has built two new Pickleball courts at Recreation Park, that's not enough for what's expected to be a large number of competitors for the sport, said Greenwood. As such, she said, the city may use existing tennis courts at Plaza Park for the tennis competition and then mark off those same courts to create smaller Pickleball courts."

Facilitating an event of this size in less than five months is no small task and the Parks & Recreation Department is looking for a lot of help to put Visalia on the Senior Games map.

"An event of this size, with the potential to attract not only hundreds of local participants but seniors from throughout the state, will need a lot of resources," states Greenwood. "We're excited about hosting this event and hope we can count on our community to support our efforts."

"There are many ways to get involved," adds Greenwood. "From joining the Visalia Senior Games Planning Task Force to volunteering at an event, to providing sponsorships and contributions; we will need lots of people to make this the great event we know it can be."

Also reported by David Castellon of the Visalia Times-Delta, "The first Senior Games was held in 1975 in St. Louis, as a sort of Olympics for graying athletes. In the years since, Senior Games have been organized in all states — except North Dakota — and Washington, D.C., with several states holding multiple Senior Games.

In California, for example, there are six regional Senior games in cities that include Pasadena, San Francisco, San Diego and Santa Rosa, with plans to launch a seventh in the fall in Visalia and an eighth in 2016 in Santa Maria.

'We're pretty excited about having Visalia add a games for 2015,' said Ann Warner Cribbs, chairwoman of the California Senior Games Association, which is part of the National Senior Games Association.

Cribbs, a former U.S. Olympian who won a gold medal with the 400-meter medley relay team in 1960 in Rome, said she was contacted in January by Visalia officials inquiring about how to become a host city for the Senior Games, which will be held annually in Visalia.

The games are an opportunity for people who have retained their athleticism despite their ages to compete, and it gives inspiration to seniors and pre-seniors to get up and get active, Cribbs said."

The Visalia Senior Games Planning Task Force meeting is open to community members who would like to learn more about the Games and who are interested in helping out. There is something for everyone with volunteer positions that range from event chairs to volunteer coordination to marketing, sponsorships and social events. The June 17 meeting will include creating a mission statement, reviewing policies and procedures established by the California State Games Association, volunteer and Task Force positions will be discussed and the steering committee for Visalia Senior Games will begin to take shape.

If you would like more information, email recreation@visalia.city or call Jeannie Greenwood at (559) 713-4042.

Join the conversation online with the hashtag #visaliaseniorgames and for updates on planning and Games development, visit www.liveandplayvisalia.com.

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Health

West Nile Found in Tulare County

West Nile Virus was detected in Visalia, Dinuba and Orosi by the Delta Vector Control District in May. Tulare County residents should be on guard to protect themselves.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the West Nile virus is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes, and there is no vaccine or medication to treat the virus. Most people infected with West Nile will have no symptoms; however, about 1 in 5 people will develop a fever with other symptoms.

Community members are urged to be aware of the breeding grounds for mosquitoes, such as homes that are unoccupied or in foreclosure that may have swimming pools or backyard ponds.

It is recommended that residents take precautions to avoid being bitten, thereby reducing the opportunity for exposure to West Nile Virus.

- Use an effective mosquito repellent such as DEET. Always follow label instructions carefully.
- Dress in long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk or in areas where mosquitoes are active.
- Drain standing water that may produce mosquitoes.
- Repair or replace door and window screens that have tears or holes.

Help track the West Nile Virus by reporting all dead birds and squirrels. Call 1-877-968-2473 to report a dead bird or squirrel, or you can submit an online report to the California West Nile website at http://westnile.ca.gov/.

Keeping Cool During Hot Summer Days

With the recent heatwave in the Central Valley, it is important to stay cool and to watch out for others. If you see someone with signs of heat stroke, dehydration or other heat-related problems, please try to assist by offering water, a way to cool off and/or by calling for help.

Most cities have cooling centers, and many libraries act as cooling centers.

Tulare County residents can visit http://tchhsa.org/hhsa/index.cfm/spotlight/cooling-centers/ to find a cooling center in their area.

Kings County residents can visit http://asmdc.org/members/a32/resources/district-cooling-centers

The National Weather Services in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross offer the following heat wave safety tips:

- Slow down
  Strenuous activities should be reduced, eliminated or rescheduled to the coolest time of the day. Individuals at risk should stay in the coolest available place, not necessarily indoors.
- Dress for summer
  Lightweight light-colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight, and helps your body maintain normal temperatures. Cover all exposed skin with a high SPF sun screen, and wear a wide brimmed hat to protect your face and head.
- Drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic fluids
  Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid coffee and tea because they contain caffeine, which increases water loss through urination. Alcoholic drinks also dehydrate by increasing urination. Soda and fruit juices contain more sugar than needed, so they aren't absorbed as easily or quickly as water or commercial sports drinks. Eat frequent small, lower protein meals (fruits, vegetables & salads).
- Spend more time in air conditioned places
  Air conditioning in homes and other buildings markedly reduces danger from the heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, spending some time each day (during hot weather) in an air conditioned environment affords some protection. Keep your electric fans running.
- Don't get too much sun
  Sunburn makes the job of heat dissipation that much more difficult.
- Check on the elderly, infants, young children and people with chronic health problems or disabilities
  They are more vulnerable to the effects of heat.

Take Special Care of Animals During Extreme Heat

During extreme heat, both agricultural animals and pets are at risk of experiencing adverse reactions from the extreme heat. Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency Animal Control offers the following tips so that residents can keep their animals healthy and safe this summer:

Never leave pets in parked cars for any period of time. The temperature in a car can reach 120° in a matter of minutes. If you see an animal in a parked car during the summer call local animal control or the police immediately.

Every animal needs shade and water: Any animal that is outside needs protection from the heat and sun, and plenty of fresh, cool water.

Know and recognize the signs of heatstroke: Signs of heatstroke include heavy panting, glazed eyes, rapid heartbeat, restlessness, excessive thirst, lethargy, fever, dizziness, lack of coordination, profuse salivation, vomiting, a deep red or purple tongue and unconsciousness.

If heatstroke occurs, take action immediately. Gradually lower their body temperature and contact your veterinarian as soon as possible. Move the animal into the shade or an air-conditioned area. Apply ice packs or cold towels to the head, neck, and chest or run cool water over them. Let them drink small amounts of cold water or lick ice cubes. Take your animal directly to a veterinarian.

Limit exercise to early morning or evening hours on very hot days. Remember that both asphalt and cement sidewalks get very hot. These surfaces reach high temperatures, and can burn your pet's paws.

These safety tips are not a substitute for veterinary care. If a heat-related illness occurs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Pertussis Cases for 2015 Surpass Total for 2014

The number of pertussis (whooping cough) cases in Tulare County has already exceeded the number of cases that were reported for all of 2014. Tulare County Public Health Officer, Dr. Karen Haught, strongly recommends vaccines to protect infants.

Pertussis is a contagious illness that is spread by coughing. Pertussis starts with a runny nose and progresses to a more significant cough with a whoop sound after coughing; vomiting after coughing can also be present.

People with pertussis have coughing spells that can last for months. Although older children and adults may develop symptoms resembling a cold, infants can have serious illness with difficulty breathing. Though immunized individuals may still sometimes get pertussis, vaccination is the best protection available against getting pertussis.

To protect infants from pertussis:

- All pregnant women should receive a whooping cough booster vaccine (Tdap) during their third trimester of every pregnancy, even if they got the vaccine before pregnancy. The protection that expectant moms receive from Tdap passes to their baby in the womb. This helps protect babies until they are old enough to get their first whooping cough vaccination at six to eight weeks of age. Ask your doctor for more information about how to obtain this vaccine.
- Family members and caretakers of newborns and young infants should receive the Tdap vaccine to protect infants in their care.
- Infants can start the childhood whooping cough vaccine series, DTaP, as early as six weeks of age. Even one dose of DTaP may offer some protection against fatal whooping cough disease in infants.
- Avoid exposing newborns and infants to others who are ill.

To protect children and adults:

- Young children need five doses of DTaP by kindergarten (ages four to six).
- Students in 7th grade in California need to have met the requirement for a Tdap booster.
- Adults are also recommended to receive a Tdap booster especially if they are in contact with infants or are health care workers.

If you think that you or your child may have symptoms of pertussis, contact your medical provider or local clinic and tell them that you are concerned that you or your child may have pertussis. Antibiotic treatment may decrease the severity of the illness and decrease the contagiousness. Family members of individuals with pertussis should take a round of preventative antibiotics.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding pertussis, please contact the Tulare County Communicable Disease Control Office at (559) 685-5720. If you have questions regarding vaccination, please contact your healthcare provider or local health clinic. You may also contact the Tulare County Immunization Office at (559) 685-5725 where Tdap vaccines are available at no cost in limited amounts and for a limited time for family members of infants.

Briefly...

VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE VISALIA UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION HAVE NEGOTIATED AN AGREEMENT FOR 2015-26

The agreement includes a 5.5% increase to the salary schedule. Step and Column movement on the salary schedule, increases in the contribution to the retirement system, and the 2015-16 increased cost of health benefits for eligible bargaining unit members will also be funded by the District. There are no changes to current benefit plans. The District and Association agreed to continue hiring additional teachers to implement the negotiated K-3 Grade Span Adjustment, which will further reduce class sizes for those grade levels. Additionally, the District and the Association agreed to modify language regarding transfer and reassignment, class size, and grievances.

FAMILY HEALTHCARE NETWORK AWARDS LOCAL STUDENTS WITH 2015 ANITA DE LA VEGA SCHOLARSHIPS

Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) recently awarded six Tulare and Kings County high school seniors, junior college students, and an FHCN employee with $600 scholarships through its Anita de la Vega Scholarship Fund. Each year, FHCN awards the scholarships to up to six students pursuing a degree in the fields of health or community health.

This year's recipients include:

- Lesly Alvarez from Corcoran High School will attend the University of California, Santa Barbara and is pursuing a career in dentistry;
- Fabiola Gomez-Delgado from Hanford High School will pursue a career in counseling and is attending the University of California, Los Angeles;
- Luisa Mendoza from Golden West High School in Visalia will pursue a degree in medicine and will attend California State University, Fresno or University of California, Merced;
- Miriam Morales from Hanford High School will pursue a career in nursing at West Hills College in Lemoore;
- Nickolas Villalobos from Dinuba High School will pursue a degree in biology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and plans to continue his education and attend medical school; and,
- Madel Comonfort, an FHCN employee and Community Health Representative in Ivanhoe, is pursuing a degree in social work at the University of Phoenix to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

"We are pleased to celebrate the achievements of each of these students and to support them as a new generation of health and community leaders," stated FHCN President & CEO Kerry Hydash.

FHCN established the Anita de la Vega Scholarship Fund in 2009 in honor of Anita de la Vega, a clinician who served at the Network for 30 years. Since 2010, FHCN has awarded six scholarships per year through the Anita de la Vega Scholarship Fund. In total, more than $21,000 has been awarded to local students. All scholarship funds are raised from employee and community donations.

APPLICATION DEADLINE NEARS FOR CALIFORNIA LEOPOLD CONSERVATION AWARD

Sand County Foundation, the California Farm Bureau Federation and Sustainable Conservation are encouraging applications for the $10,000 California Leopold Conservation Award. The award honors California farmers, ranchers and other private landowners who demonstrate outstanding natural resources stewardship and practice conservation leadership and outreach. Applications must be postmarked by July 10, 2015.

"As the 2014 California Leopold Conservation Award recipient, we encourage others to share their conservation efforts through this program," said Judith Redmond, an owner of Fully Belly Farm in Guinda. The "Leopold Conservation Award is the highest national award given to land stewards who focus on conservation."

"Full Belly Farm demonstrates that business success goes hand in hand with thoughtful natural resources stewardship," said Brent Haglund, Ph.D., Sand County Foundation President. "We look forward to recognizing more outstanding landowners who are committed to conservation in California."

The Leopold Conservation Award is given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold. In his influential 1949 book, A Sand County Almanac, he called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage. The competitive award recognizes landowner achievement in voluntary conservation. It consists of a crystal depicting Aldo Leopold and $10,000.

The 2015 California Leopold Conservation Award will be presented December 5 at the California Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Meeting in Reno. For award and application information, please visit www.leopoldconservationaward.org.

The California Leopold Conservation Award is possible thanks to generous contributions from many organizations, including American AgCredit, The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense Fund, The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, DuPont Pioneer and The Mosaic Company. Sand County Foundation presents Leopold Conservation Awards in California, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION TRAINING OFFERED IN HONOR OF WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Tulare County Public Guardian & Adult Protective Services invite community members to attend training sessions on how to protect older and dependent adults from abuse. Residents who attend any of the local trainings will learn about elder abuse and receive information about services and resources available.

From July 2014 to May 2015, Tulare County Adult Protective Services received over 1,559 reports of suspected elder and dependent adult abuse. This is a 47 percent increase in reports from two years ago.

Elder and dependent adult abuse can involve neglect, self-neglect, and physical, emotional, sexual or financial abuse resulting in harm or loss (or potential harm or loss). Elder abuse affects seniors across all socioeconomic groups, cultures and races. Each year, older adults lose billions of dollars in telemarketing fraud, mail scams and fake lotto schemes.

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, "Every year an estimated five million, or one in 10 older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation. Experts believe that only one in 44 cases of financial abuse is reported."

The dates for training are as follows:

- June 22 - Exeter Senior Center, 10:30 am
- June 24 - Cutler-Orosi Senior Center, 10:00 am
- June 25 - Lindsay Senior Center, 9:00 am
- June 30 - Porterville Senior Center, 11:00 am

During the month of June, The Tulare County Public Guardian & Adult Protective Services staff place purple flags on the front lawn of government Plaza on South Mooney. Each flag represents one report of abuse in Tulare County between 2014 and 2015.

The mission of Tulare County Public Guardian & Adult Protective Services is to "Protect older and dependent adults from abuse and provide excellent public service to the community." For more information, call 559-623-0650.

WHCCD STRIVES FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY, RECEIVES PG&E REBATE FOR EFFORTS

The West Hills Community College District recently completed a large scale project at both the district's Coalinga campus and Lemoore campus which involved replacing more 200 lights with energy efficient LED fixtures.

At the district's most recent board meeting, PG&E presented a rebate check for $54,040.30 based on the reduction of energy consumption district-wide as a result of the project.

"The whole purpose of this project was to reduce our carbon footprint and reduce our electrical consumption," said Ken Stoppenbrink, deputy chancellor. "With this rebate, we can apply it with other funding toward more energy efficient projects, thus saving not only more energy but reducing our carbon footprint further."

The project came about as a result of funding from Proposition 39, which made funds available to community colleges for energy projects. The district replaced exterior site lighting with LED lamps and fixtures at both the Coalinga and Lemoore campuses. On the Coalinga campus, 116 lights were retrofitted while at Lemoore, 144 lights were retrofitted.

Following the completion of the project in August, 2014, PG&E evaluated it as part of its utility incentive program, which offers rebates for energy saving projects.

It found the project will save approximately 214,525 kilowatt-hours of energy per year, an estimated $24,581 in savings for the district in the first year alone. As a result, the district was awarded a utility rebate based on calculated savings and PG&E incentive guidelines.

"PG&E provides incentives to customers who save energy and, because they verified that we had reduced our energy consumption, they provided us with a rebate," said Stoppenbrink.

The project is only one of several efforts the district has made to conserve energy. WHCCD is also working with Cenergistic, a Dallas firm, to cut energy costs through monitoring of control systems and the education of staff.

SELF-HELP ENTERPRISES AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS TO LOCAL STUDENTS

Self-Help Enterprises, a community development organization whose mission is to work together with low-income families to build and sustain healthy homes and communities, has awarded $6,500 in scholarship awards to nine local students in recognition of outstanding scholastic achievement.

The $1,000 scholarship awards went to, among others:

- Arturo Corona (Lindsay) – Arturo lives with his farmworker mother and siblings in a home they built in Lindsay. Arturo received top scores in advanced placement physiology, earth science, biology and chemistry, while also participating in several campus clubs and volunteer opportunities. He has a 3.8 GPA and has been accepted at UC Berkeley where he will start on the road to becoming a doctor.

The $500 scholarship awards went to:

- Sequoia Jordan (Chowchilla) – Sequoia and her brother live in a home purchased by their single mother through the Homebuyer Assistance Program in Chowchilla. She is a five-sport athlete at Chowchilla High, where she also participated in campus clubs while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. She also participated in a two-week mission trip to the Dominican Republic. Sequoia has been accepted to Fresno Pacific University where she will study youth ministry and fine arts.
- Jeny Reyes (Goshen) – Jeny is the daughter of a single mother who built their home in Goshen. Jeny is scheduled to graduate high school as a junior. She has been involved in on campus clubs and has recently registered at College of the Sequoias with a goal of becoming a nurse.
- Natyeli Yepes (Reedley) – Natyeli is the daughter of farmworker parents who built their home in Reedley. She was an honor roll student throughout high school and was also on the cross country and track teams. Even though she was accepted at UC campuses in Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Merced and Santa Barbara, Natyeli decided to begin her undergraduate work at Reedley College. She plans to transfer to UC Davis to pursue a degree in neurobiology with the eventual goal of becoming a neurosurgeon or researcher.

Man-Made Drought: A Guide To California's Water Wars

Devin Nunes

In the summer of 2002, shortly before I was elected to Congress, I sat through an eye-opening meeting with representatives from the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and several local environmental activist groups. Hoping to convince me to support various water restrictions, they argued that San Joaquin Valley farmers should stop growing alfalfa and cotton in order to save water — though they allowed that the planting of high-value crops such as almonds could continue.

Then, as our discussion turned to the groups' overall vision for the San Joaquin Valley, they told me something astonishing:

Their goal was to remove 1.3 million acres of farmland from production. They showed me maps that laid out their whole plan: From Merced all the way down to Bakersfield, and on the entire west side of the Valley as well as part of the east side, productive agriculture would end and the land would return to some ideal state of nature. I was stunned by the vicious audacity of their goal — and I quickly learned how dedicated they were to realizing it.

How To Steal Water And Get Away With It

For decades, extreme environmentalists have pursued this goal in California with relentless determination. The method they have used to depopulate the targeted land — water deprivation — has been ruthless and effective.

Much of the media and many politicians blame the San Joaquin Valley's water shortage on drought, but that is merely an aggravating factor. From my experience representing California's agricultural heartland, I know that our water crisis is not an unfortunate natural occurrence; it is the intended result of a long-term campaign waged by radical environmentalists who resorted to political pressure as well as profuse lawsuits.

Working in cooperation with sympathetic judges and friendly federal and state officials, environmental groups have gone to extreme lengths to deprive the San Joaquin Valley, the heart of much of the U.S. agricultural production, of much-needed water. Consider the following actions they took:

The Central Valley Project Improvement Act: Backed by the NRDC, Sierra Club and other extreme environmental groups, large Democratic majorities in Congress passed the CVPIA in 1992 after attaching it to a must-pass public lands bill. The act stipulated that 800,000 acre-feet of water — or 260 billion gallons — on the Valley's west side had to be diverted annually to environmental causes, with an additional 400,000 acre-feet later being diverted annually to wildlife refuges.

Smelt and salmon biological opinions: Lawsuits filed by the NRDC and similar organizations forced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to issue, respectively, biological opinions on smelt (in 2008) and on salmon (in 2009). These opinions virtually ended operation of the Jones and Banks pumping plants — the two major pumping stations that move San Joaquin River Delta water — and resulted in massive diversions of water for environmental purposes.

The San Joaquin River Settlement: After nearly two decades of litigation related to a lawsuit filed in 1988 by the NRDC, Sierra Club and other environmental groups, San Joaquin Valley agriculture organizations agreed to a settlement in 2006, later approved by a Democratic Congress and signed into law by President Obama. The settlement created the San Joaquin River Restoration Program. The program, which aims to create salmon runs along the San Joaquin River, required major new water diversions from Valley communities. Despite warnings from me and other California Republicans, agriculture groups naively approved the settlement based on false promises by the settlement's supporters that Valley water supplies would eventually be restored at some future, unspecified date.

Groundwater regulation: In September 2014, California Gov. Jerry Brown approved regulations requiring that water basins implement plans to achieve "groundwater sustainability" — essentially limiting how much water locals can use from underground storage supplies. But these pumping restrictions, slated to take effect over the next decade, will reduce access to what has become the final water source for many Valley communities, which have increasingly turned to groundwater pumping as their surface water supplies were drastically cut.

A Litany Of Hypocrisy

As radical groups have pursued this campaign to dry up the San Joaquin Valley, it's worth noting some of their stunning contradictions, hypocrisies, fallacies and failures:

"There's not enough water in California": Environmentalists often claim that the California water crisis stems from the state not having enough water to satisfy its rapidly growing population, especially during a drought.

However, the state in fact has abundant water flowing into the Delta, which is the heart of California's irrigation structure. Water that originates in the snowpack of the Sierra Nevada Mountains runs off into the Delta, which has two pumping stations that help distribute the water throughout the state.

But on average, due to environmental regulations as well as a lack of water storage capacity (attributable, in large part, to activist groups' opposition to new storage projects), 70% of the water that enters the Delta is simply flushed into the ocean. California's water infrastructure was designed to withstand five years of drought, so the current crisis, which began about three years ago, should not be a crisis at all. During those three years, the state has flushed more than 2 million acre-feet of water — or 652 billion gallons — into the ocean due to the aforementioned biological opinions, which have prevented the irrigation infrastructure from operating at full capacity.

"Farmers use 80% of California's water": Having deliberately reduced the California water supply through decades of litigation, the radicals now need a scapegoat for the resulting crisis. So they blame farmers ("big agriculture," as they call them) for using 80% of the state's water.

This statistic, widely parroted by the media and some politicians, is a gross distortion. Of the water that is captured for use, farmers get 40%, cities get 10% and a full 50% goes to environmental purposes — that is, it gets flushed into the ocean. By arbitrarily excluding the huge environmental water diversion from their calculations — as if it is somehow irrelevant to the water crisis — environmentalists deceptively double the farmers' usage from 40% to 80%.

If at first you don't succeed, do the exact same thing: Many of the Delta water cuts stem from the radicals' litigation meant to protect salmon and smelt. Yet after decades of water reductions, the salmon population fluctuates wildly, while the smelt population has fallen to historic lows. The radicals' solution, however, is always to dump even more water from the Delta into the ocean, even though this approach has failed time and again.

The striped bass absurdity: If the radicals really want to protect salmon and the Delta smelt, it's a bit of a mystery why they also champion protections for the striped bass, a non-native species that eats both salmon and smelt.

Hetch Hetchy hypocrites: The San Francisco Bay Area provides a primary support base for many environmental groups. Lucky for them, their supporters don't have to endure the kinds of hardships these organizations have foisted on San Joaquin Valley communities.

While the radicals push for ever-harsher water restrictions in the Valley, their Bay Area supporters enjoy an unimpeded water supply piped in across the state from the Hetch Hetchy reservoir in Yosemite National Park. This water is diverted around the Delta, meaning it does not contribute to the Delta's water quality standards. Environmental groups have conveniently decided not to subject Hetch Hetchy water to any sort of litigation that would cut the supply to the Bay Area.

We're from the government, and we're here to help: Government agencies that catch smelt as part of scientific population measurements actually kill more of the fish than are destroyed in the supposedly killer water pumps.

Hitchhiking salmon: The San Joaquin River Settlement is estimated already to have cost taxpayers $1.2 billion — and it's clear to me that the total price tag will likely exceed $2 billion — in a disastrous effort to restore salmon runs to the San Joaquin River.

Moreover, the settlement legislation defines success as reintroducing 500 salmon to the river, which means spending $4 million per fish. The salmon, which have not been in the river for more than half a century, have proved so incapable of sustaining themselves that agents have resorted to plucking them out of the water and trucking them wherever they are supposed to go. It is a badly kept secret among both environmentalists and federal officials that this project has already failed.

A man-made state of nature: The radicals claim they want to reverse human depredations in the Delta and restore fish to their natural habitat. Yet the entire Delta system is not natural at all. It's a man-made network of islands that functions only thanks to upstream water storage projects. In fact, without man-made storage projects, canals and dams, in dry years such as this the rivers would quickly run dry, meaning there would be no water and no fish.

A Three-Step Solution

The radicals have pursued their plan methodically and successfully; between the CVPIA, the biological opinions, and the San Joaquin River Settlement, around a million acres of farmland have been idled. What's left of the water supply is inadequate for sustaining Valley farming communities: South of the Delta, we now face an annual water supply deficit of approximately 2.5 million acre-feet, or 815 billion gallons.

In fact, with the state groundwater regulations announced last year, the radicals are poised to achieve their goal. The depletion of groundwater is a direct effect — and indeed, was an intended result — of the radicals' assault on our surface water.

(After all, if farmers, churches, schools and communities can't get surface water, they'll predictably resort to ground water.)

But the radicals have perversely cited the groundwater depletion they themselves engineered to justify regulating the groundwater supply. This is the final step in their program, since many farmers will not be able to keep growing food if they continue to receive zero water allocations and are restricted from tapping enough ground water.

The Valley cannot endure this situation much longer, but the good news is that it's not too late to save our communities. Led by the Valley's Republican delegation, the U.S. House has passed legislation twice that would bring a long-term end to the water crisis. The solution comprises these three simple measures:

- Return Delta pumping to normal operations at federal and state pumps. Because normal pumping levels are already paid for, this measure would cost taxpayers zero dollars.
- Fix the San Joaquin River Settlement. Instead of continuing to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on an unworkable scheme to recreate salmon runs, we should turn the San Joaquin River into a year-round flowing river with recirculated water. This approach would be good

WATER WARS continued on **16 »**

Viewpoint

Will Americans Vote for a Democratic Socialist?

Lawrence S. Wittner

The recent announcement by U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, an avowed "democratic socialist," that he is running for the Democratic nomination for President raises the question of whether Americans will vote for a candidate with that political orientation.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the idea of democratic socialism -- democratic control of the economy -- had substantial popularity in the United States. At the time, the Socialist Party of America was a thriving, rapidly-growing political organization, much like its democratic socialist counterparts abroad -- the British Labour Party, the French Socialist Party, the German Social Democratic Party, the Australian Labor Party, and numerous other rising, working class-based political entities around the world.

In 1912, when the United States had a much smaller population than today, the Socialist Party had 118,000 dues-paying members and drew nearly a million votes for its candidate, Eugene V. Debs, the great labor leader, for President. (The victor that year was the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, who drew six million votes.) Furthermore, the party held 1,200 public offices in 340 cities, including 79 mayors in 24 states. Socialist administrations were elected in: Minneapolis, Minnesota; Butte, Montana; Flint, Michigan; Schenectady, New York, and in 75 other cities across the country. In 1912, the Socialist Party claimed 323 English and foreign language publications with a total circulation in excess of two million.

Of course, this socialist surge didn't last. The Democratic and Republican parties, faced with this threat to their political future, turned to supporting progressive agendas -- breaking up or regulating giant corporations, curbing corporate abuses and championing a graduated income tax -- that stole the socialists' thunder. In addition, after U.S. entry into World War I, an action opposed by the socialists, the federal and state governments moved to crush the Socialist Party -- arresting and imprisoning its leaders (including Debs), purging its elected officials and closing down its publications. Moreover, one portion of the party, excited by the success of revolutionaries in overthrowing Russia's Czar and establishing the Soviet Union, broke with the Socialist Party and established Communist rivals. Co-opted by the mainstream parties, repressed by government, and abandoned by would-be revolutionaries, the Socialist Party never recovered.

Even so, democratic socialism retained a lingering influence in American life. When a new wave of reform occurred during the New Deal of the 1930s, it included numerous measures advocated and popularized by the Socialist Party: Social Security; public jobs programs like the WPA; minimum wage laws; maximum hour laws; and a steep tax on the wealthy. Here and there, although rarely, socialists even secured public office, and Milwaukee voters regularly elected socialist mayors until 1948. Starting in 1928 and running through the early post-World War II era, Norman Thomas became the attractive, articulate leader of the Socialist Party, and was widely respected among many American liberals and union leaders.

What nearly eliminated the Socialist Party was a combination of New Deal measures (which drew labor and other key constituencies into the Democratic Party) and the public's identification of Socialism with Communism. Although, in fact, the American Socialist and Communist parties were bitter rivals -- the former championing democratic socialism on the British model and the latter authoritarian socialism on the Soviet model -- many Americans, influenced by dire conservative warnings, confused the two. Particularly during the Cold War, this further undermined the Socialist Party.

In the early 1970's, with the party barely surviving, most democratic socialists decided it was time to reassess their strategy. They asked: Did the collapse of the Socialist Party mean that, in the United States, democratic socialism was unpopular, or did it mean that *third party voting* was unpopular? After all, large numbers of Americans supported democratic socialist programs, ranging from national healthcare to public education, from public transportation to taxing the rich, from preserving the environment to defending workers' rights. What would happen if democratic socialists worked for their programs *within* the Democratic Party, where the typical constituencies of the world's democratic socialist parties -- unions, racial minorities, women's rights activists and environmentalists -- were already located? Led by the party's titular leader, Michael Harrington, whose book *The Other America* sparked the War on Poverty of the 1960's, they organized Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and plunged into major social movements and into the Democratic Party.

Although, in the ensuing decades, DSA made little progress toward rebuilding a mass, high profile democratic socialist organization, it did manage to pull thousands of union, racial justice, women's rights and environmental activists into its orbit. DSA also discovered a significant number of leftwing Democratic and, sometimes, independent candidates for office who welcomed its support and occasionally joined it. Bernie Sanders -- an independent who was elected as mayor of Burlington, Vermont's only Congressman, and a U.S. Senator from Vermont -- is certainly one of the most successful of these politicians. Indeed, in 2012 he won re-election to the Senate with 71 percent of the vote.

But will Americans actually support a democratic socialist in the Democratic Presidential primaries? Sanders himself has conceded that the odds are heavily against him. Even so, although a Quinnipiac poll of American voters in late May of this year, found him far behind the much better known and better funded Hillary Clinton, his 15 percent of the vote placed him well ahead of all other potential Democratic candidates. Also, there's great potential for broadening his support. The latest poll on Americans' attitudes toward "socialism," taken in December 2011, found that 31 percent of respondents had a positive reaction to it. And what if Americans had been asked about their attitude toward "*democratic* socialism"?

Consequently, even if Hillary Clinton emerges as the Democratic nominee, as seems likely, a good showing by Sanders could strengthen the democratic socialist current in American life.

Lawrence S. Wittner is Professor of History emeritus at SUNY/Albany and is syndicated by PeaceVoice. His latest book is a satirical novel about university corporatization and rebellion, What's Going On at UAardvark?

U.S Soccer Should Not Look the Other Way on Hope Solo

Laura Finley

If the U.S. is serious that domestic violence is unacceptable, even when perpetrated by the heroes we idolize, then there is absolutely no way we should be looking the other way when it comes to U.S. soccer goalkeeper Hope Solo.

In early June, *ESPN's Outside the Lines* aired an interview with Solo's sister, Teresa Obert, about the incident that occurred a year ago. Obert's story differs dramatically from the one that Solo keeps getting the chance to repeat. Solo's story centers on herself as victim. She claims her nephew, who is 6 foot 8 and weighs 270 pounds, was the one who hit her on the head with a broomstick and then threatened her with a gun. She claims that she was severely concussed from the incident, although no medical evidence has yet confirmed that conclusion.

Obert claimed that Solo arrived to her home drunk and upset with her husband. Obert says that after more drinking, Solo began insulting her 17-year-old nephew, and then he claims she lunged at him, trying to hit him in the face. She connected multiple times, the boy says, and then he subdued her briefly but she grabbed his hair and began "repeatedly" slamming his head into the concrete. Obert alleges that when she tried to intervene, Solo punched her "multiple times." At this point Obert's son called 911, although the melee continued until police arrived.

As is often the case, when the police arrived all parties involved looked visibly upset. Officer Elizabeth Voss observed physical injuries on Obert's son and that his clothing was in disarray. The other officer, Chuck Pierce, recorded similar injuries on Obert. Sergeant Phil Goguen, the first on the scene, noted that Solo's breath smelled of liquor and she was slurring. She claimed she was protecting herself but refused to provide any specifics. The report notes that Goguen did not observe any injuries on Solo. Given all of the above, Goguen determined, per state law, that Solo was the primary aggressor.

Her poor behavior did not stop there. When she was being booked at the Kirkland Jail, Solo allegedly yelled profanities at the officers involved and repeatedly harassed the officers, making fun of them because, as she allegedly put it, her necklace was worth more than their salaries. She was then transferred to another facility and in the process continued to abuse the officers involved.

After the incident, Obert obtained a temporary restraining order against Solo and then a permanent order was issued in January, 2015.

Just like the NFL with the Ray Rice incident (until it got too big to ignore), U.S Soccer was largely silent on the case. Three months later it released a statement saying that Solo was cleared to play. In their investigation, *Outside the Lines* found no evidence to suggest that U.S Soccer did any kind of investigation into the incident…no records that it contacted the prosecutors, police, or Obert and her son, nor did it request the police records of the case.

Sure, there are inconsistencies in Obert and her son's stories, but that too is not unusual. Incidents of domestic violence are often a blur, as victims are more concerned with protecting themselves than recording the specifics. On January 13, 2015, a judge dismissed the case on procedural grounds, not based on evidence, and on February 9 the prosecutor's office announced it was appealing the decision, which Prosecutor Tamara McElyea said was extremely rare.

Sports journalist Keith Olbermann has been most vehement in his calls for U.S Soccer to suspend Solo, noting that not only is she supposed to be a role model, but that because she is representing the U.S. she, her coach, Jill Ellis, and U.S. Soccer President Sanil Gulati are also representing each of us.

But of course she has not been suspended, as the U.S Women's Soccer team is performing well in the World Cup and Solo is considered by many to be the hero of those victories. Most media outlets are contributing to the free pass Solo has received, calling the last year a "roller coaster" instead of providing specifics. Despite her many embarrassing debacles, Solo was even named team captain. Coach Ellis even had the audacity to claim that most of the players have no idea that the incident even happened and that those who do have "moved on." And, of course, Nike continued her endorsement package, which is odd, given that it separated with Rice who was actually cleared of all charges while those against Solo are pending.

While it is up to the court's to determine whether Solo is guilty of domestic violence, U.S. Soccer and Nike can and should engage in a serious investigation of her behavior. Her gender and her gifts as a goalkeeper should not be a factor. Sadly, both seem to be.

Laura Finley, Ph.D., teaches in the Barry University Department of Sociology & Criminology and is syndicated by PeaceVoice.

Columns & Letters

"Ok, so millions were spent on the construction, etc. of barn museum (which is gated off to the public by the way). Is it serving its intended use? Open it up to the public or have an event there so EVERYONE in attendance, not just us ol' Visalians, would be to witness the egregiously neglected eyesore and health hazard our once-beautiful Mooney Grove has become? Its current condition is shameful, especially when considering the fact that I still see (what I'm assuming are paid) employees driving around the grounds.

On a side note, the frisbee golfers sure do seem to be enjoying themselves. The grass on their course is nice and green, relatively free of animal excrement, and it has a nice new bridge. ;)"

— ***m**, on **Mooney Grove Continues to Receive Complaints***

"What has the GOP done in California?

Sacramento is being run by the Progressives and the GOP sits around and rubs their hands together.

Why not get out and fight back?? Get the information out there what the Progressives are doing to Our State and County… Going to expensive dinners does not get it; it is time to get dirty and fight."

— ***John Keyes**, on **Is Tulare County's GOP Conservative Enough?***

"The GOP Central Committee isn't conservative enough, and supporting the Log Cabin Republicans is an issue? Wow. Keep it up, Tulare County GOP. You're making things easier for us liberals, and you'll turn this region Democrat yet!"

— ***Jim Reeves**, on **Is Tulare County's GOP Conservative Enough?***

"Love and respect this paper for staying on top of the story. Accurately communicating the details. Catherine Doe keep up the good work!!!!"

— ***Susan**, on **Chickens Do Not Cross Road***

"For most people considering a move to a city (vs. country) the main quality-of-life indicators typically include some of these: crime rate, other safety factors (like disability access), availability/quality/price of housing, roadways and bike lanes, schools, recreational facilities and events and churches. And that's only for the folks who do much research before moving. To date there's no data showing that anyone has declined to move to the city of Visalia because of animal-related ordinances. Needless to say, a realist will move wherever he/she feels his most *basic* needs are pretty much met from the start."

— ***Renee Lapin**, on **Mooney Grove Continues to Receive Complaints***

"Mooney Grove neglect began before we lost the Pioneer Statue in the '50s.due to "leaders" refusal to spend money for its care. Always seems to be enough money for begging trips to D C seeking funds too purchase a broken.unprofitable ,rail line to Tovista ,tho.Makes one wonder the implcation of the last statement in Ms, Does' xlnt article. : "–the problem is not the drought."Condemnation for another commercial tax base enhancememt project would not surprise me. Hugh Mooneys' generosity.being trampled by supervisors indifference !!! hm"

— ***Howard Mancha**, on **Mooney Grove Continues to Receive Complaints***

"I don't have a real solution for increased funding, but I would suggest planting drought tolerant trees such as valley oak trees. I think it would be nice to see a large concentration of oak trees, that rivals the valley oak preserve off the 198. Park maintenance should be a priority."

— ***Dane Wolfley**, on **Mooney Grove Continues to Receive Complaints***

"Well if there is a fire let it burn and clean itself out. Let this disaster be a lesson to us all. If you don't agree with what I say, take action. Let there be logging again. We are not in control, we never really were.

cheers"

— ***Court Ballinger**, on **National Forest Die-Off Cause of Impending Disaster***

"Ms. Freeman says, "I've also asked them to be frank with me and let me know if they plan to take the nearly $4000 to get it on the agenda and then just shoot it down." That's not how government works. A resident might have to pay $6000 with an applicaton to Permits and Planning, even more, just to see if he or she can get his block re-zoned…or if a second home can be built on his own property. There's *never* a promise, even a hint in advance, that a proposal would be approved. City hall departments are *staff*… not the same branch of government as Council (elected legislators). Later on it may be necessary, in addition, to deal with the Planning Commission. The same applies to the possibility of a ballot initiative–there are no guarantees that the majority (of 52,000 registered voters) would be interested in a code that allows farm animals of any type, much less accept it. Moral of the story? "You can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs."

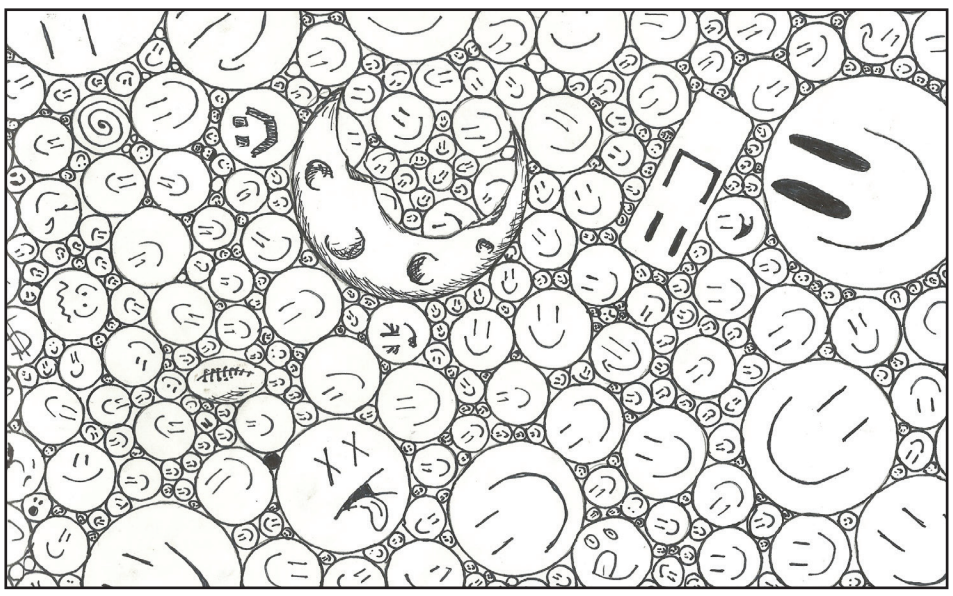
— ***Renee Lapin**, on **Council Votes On How To Put An Item on the Agenda***

"When will he be attending prayers at a mosque?"

— ***Quando**, on **"Using An Elected Government Position to Promote.."***

Black Tie

Alex Oldenbourg



The growing field of Republican presidential candidates.

Veteran's Corner

Veterans Employment Committee is Looking for New Members

Joe Wright

The Kings County Veterans Employment Committee (VEC) is comprised of both public and private sector members who are interested in the employment issues of our local veterans' community. The VEC promotes the importance and advantages of hiring, training, and retraining highly qualified veterans.

Veterans have the proven ability to quickly learn new skills and concepts. They possess identifiable and transferable skills proven to achieve success. They understand practical ways to manage and achieve goals even in the most trying circumstances. They are trained to lead by example as well as through direction, delegation, motivation and inspiration.

Objectives of the VEC include providing a "clearinghouse" for questions, concerns and recommendations concerning the effectiveness of employment services that are provided by EDD/One-Stop and available to veterans in our community. The VEC confers regularly with EDD/One-Stop staff on policy matters and recommendations to improve and expand the services provided to veterans.

The VEC is currently looking for new members who are committed to improving employment and training opportunities for veterans, as well as sharing and receiving updated information on issues that affect employment of veterans. The VEC is specifically looking for new members from NAS Lemoore and the local business community.

The VEC meets monthly on the third Wednesday at 3:00 pm, at Veterans Hall in downtown Hanford. Those interest in becoming a member, please contact Scott Holwell at 852-2661 or Joe Wright at 852-2659.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

"To put the approximately 1300 signatures into perspective, in the 2013 election, John Crabtree secured a seat on the Visalia Unified School Board with 809 votes over his opponent David Alviso."

Unfortunately this paradigm can't be applied to a resident petition for placing an item on a Council agenda. The VUSD board is divided into seven separate districts; that trustee had to be officially voted in by a majority of constituents in his district.

In the case of agendizing a hearing regarding the goats, it would have to be approved by a majority of willing Council members –and there's no known correlation between petition signatures and how the five Council members would end up voting."

— ***Renee Lapin**, on **Council Votes On How To Put An Item on the Agenda***

Corrections

The Editor apologizes for the following errors in the 4 June *Valley Voice*:

- Devin Nunes was referened as R-Hanford; he is R-Tulare in the "Is Tulare County's GOP Conservative Enough?" article.
- For repeating the "Career Pathways" article.

Water Wars

Continued from p. 13

for the warm-water fish habitat and for recreation, and it would save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars that will otherwise go down the salmon-run rat hole.

- Expedite and approve construction of major new water projects. This should include building the Temperance Flat dam along the San Joaquin River, raising Shasta dam to increase its reservoir capacity, expanding the San Luis Reservoir and approving construction of the Sites Reservoir in the Sacramento Valley. Because water users themselves should rightfully pay for these projects, they would cost federal taxpayers zero dollars.

These measures would not only end the water crisis, they would improve the environment for fish and wildlife — all while saving taxpayer dollars.

The Price of Inaction

I warned of the likely outcome of the radicals' campaign in my testimony to a House committee back in 2009:

"Failure to act, and it's over. You will witness the collapse of modern civilization in the San Joaquin Valley."

That is indeed the grim future facing the Valley if we don't change our present trajectory.

The solution passed twice by the U.S. House, however, was blocked by Senate Democrats, who were supported by the administration of Gov. Brown as well as the Obama administration.

These Democrats need to begin speaking frankly and honestly with San Joaquin Valley communities, and with Californians more broadly, about the effects of idling 1.3 million acres of farmland.

This will ruin not only Valley farming operations, but will wipe out entire swathes of associated local businesses and industries.

The damage is not limited to the Valley.

Although residents of coastal areas such as Los Angeles, the Bay Area and San Diego have been led to believe they are being subject to water restrictions due to the drought, that's not actually true.

As in the Valley, these areas and many others ultimately depend on the Delta pumps for their water supply.

If the pumps had been functioning normally for the past decade, none of these cities would be undergoing a water crisis today.

And it's a safe bet that Brown's mandatory water reductions will not alleviate the crisis, leading to a drastic increase in restrictions in the not-too-distant future.

Watering your lawn, washing your car and countless other everyday activities will be banned up and down California.

In their mania to attack Central Valley farming, the radicals are inadvertently running the entire state out of water.

Endgame

Many organizations representing California agriculture, including water districts and — shockingly — even some San Joaquin Valley cities and counties, became part of the problem instead of the solution, having lent no support to the House-passed water bills.

Suffering from a strange kind of Stockholm Syndrome, many of these groups and agencies hope that if they meekly accept their fate, their overlords will magnanimously bestow a few drops of water on them.

This mousy strategy, which willfully ignores what the radicals are really trying to achieve, hasn't worked out well for growers of almonds and other high-value crops.

Although the radicals had been promising them a free pass back when the groups met with me in 2002, these growers have now become the radicals' primary scapegoat for the water crisis.

This condemnation is reflected in articles such as *The Atlantic's* "The Dark Side of Almond Use," *The Guardian's* "Alarm as Almond Farms Consume California's Water," and *Bloomberg View's* "Amid a Drought, Cue the Almond Shaming."

Sadly, the end is near for communities whose land will be forced out of production.

One hopes the affected families will eventually find a more welcome home in some other state where those who wield power appreciate folks who grow our food instead of demonize them.

But for now, the pitiless, decades-long assault to deprive them of their livelihoods is hurtling toward its apex.

Meanwhile, many of those capable of advancing a solution are content to wring their hands, blame global warming and continue whistling past the graveyard.

Agriculture groups, water districts and municipalities that refuse to support the two House-passed bills owe their constituents an alternative solution that will resolve our water shortfall.

Water bureaucrats who ignore or oppose the most prominent, viable solutions while offering no alternative are, in effect, complicit in the radicals' long struggle.

They should publicly declare which land ought to come out of production and which Valley industries should be eliminated since they have no proposals to steer us away from that outcome.

The Valley's critical situation today demands unity around constructive solutions. To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin, we must all hang together, or we will surely all hang separately.

Devin Nunes is chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. He represents California's 22nd congressional district. This article is courtesy of Investor's Business Daily.

Valley Voice
Valley Scene

REO Speedwagon Concert Benefits Creative Center

Staff Reports

Formed in 1967, signed in 1971, and fronted by iconic vocalist Kevin Cronin since 1972, REO Speedwagon is a band where the main constant over the decades is a never-ending desire to give their all to their fans, year in and year out.

Formed loosely in the late '60s at college in Champaign, IL, REO (named after the precursor to the light truck) rode to gigs in station wagons, hopping from small gigs to even tinier gigs, just to get their name out. It worked, as fans quickly realized there was much more going on here than your average college party band.

By the early '70s, the band's unrelenting drive, as well as non-stop touring and recording, jump-started the burgeoning rock movement in the Midwest. It carved a path that was eventually followed by STYX, Kansas, Cheap Trick and more. Platinum albums and freeform FM radio staples such as "Ridin' The Storm Out" followed, setting the stage for 1980's explosive Hi Infidelity. REO rode the top of the charts with a RIAA-certified 22 million albums sold in the U.S. and 40 million around the globe, with a string of gold and platinum records and international hit singles. They chartered 13 Top 40 hits, including "Keep on Loving You" and "Can't Fight this Feeling."

The band has gone on stage and in the studio to work- dozens of albums, thousands of concerts, and countless radio spins. Their eyes have always been on the future and on the road - not a year has gone by where REO Speedwagon didn't perform live, thrilling fans with hit filled sets.

During this same era, in 1977 to be exact, The Creative Center here in Visalia was officially incorporated. The Creative Center is a non-profit community arts center for adults with developmental disabilities with the mission of fostering self-expression, self-worth and personal growth through the arts, community integration, providing cultural resources

to the community, and recognizing the individual's value and contribution.

REO Speedwagon's upcoming concert at the Visalia Fox Theatre on June 25 is a benefit for The Creative Center Foundation. Promoters, Mike Cavale and Ryan Stillwater of Rainmaker Productions, are not your typical promoters. Each concert they promote benefits a local, non-profit organization like The Creative Center.

"We [Rainmaker Productions] started doing these types of shows because of great organizations like The Creative Center," said Rainmaker partner Mike Cavale. "We get to combine our love for live music with a fundraising event, allowing people to experience a fantastic show and support a great cause at the same time."

Tickets start at $39 and are available now at the Visalia Fox Theatre Box Office, 308 W. Main St., (559) 625-1FOX (1369) or online at foxvisalia.org

Student Art Award-Winner Draws Inspiration from Teacher, UNICEF

Dave Adalian

Vivian Napoles, a 2015 Redwood High School graduate, has taken third place in the Congressional Art Competition for her work "The Endeavor for Peace." This marks the second year in a row Napoles has taken the bronze award in the competition.

Vivian Napoles, a 2015 graduate of Redwood High, works on her current project. Napoles took third place for the second year in the Congressional Art Contest for the 23rd District.

This year's winner for Napoles, 17, depicts a hopeful-looking child, dirty and wrapped in a worn blanket, her face scarred and tear-stained.

The image is done in shades of gray, except for the child's eyes, colored a light blue to make them the image's focal point.

"I wanted to depict the troubles of kids outside this country," Napoles said.

Drawing since she was a middle school student, the artist said the work features her favorite form.

"Faces is what I enjoy," Napoles said. "It's all I do. I drew the girl -- most people can't tell if it's a boy or a girl. I added the dirt, the scars, the blanket around her."

She chose her subject matter for the contest carefully not just because of the wide publicity the winners receive: Napoles also knew it would be seen by one individual in particular. Locally, the contest is sponsored by Congressional Representative Devin Nunes's (R-Hanford) office.

"I knew this competition got a lot of attention," she said. "I knew, if it won or not, a lot of people would see it -- our congressman would see it."

The winning piece was also inspired by Napoles' work as the founding president of RHS's UNICEF Club, an international group dedicated to raising money for children's causes and sponsored by the United Nations. Napoles became motivated to form the club after joining another chapter, one founded by her cousin, at the high school she attended before moving to RHS.

"The inspiration came from one of my cousins," she said, "seeing all the differences we made in children's lives. I noticed my high school didn't have one, so I created it."

The club is active during the entire school year, gathering money to help fund UNICEF's work by holding sales on campus, as well as joining in the annual Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF program.

"Anything we could raise up, we knew it would make a difference," Napoles said.

ART AWARD continued on **19 »**

Debbie Shane Shows Her Eclectic Art

Donna Orozco

Debbie Shane classifies her art as "mixed media." But it is much more than that. Her signature three-dimensional dragon works include gourd tiles, paper mache, batik, copper, driftwood, leather, polymer clay, cane, palm fronds and semi-precious stones. All put together in such an intricate way that you could study it for an hour and never discover all the bits and pieces.

She calls the two dragons "The Gift." They depict the male and female, the yin and yang, the dark and light, polarities people deal with. Each took three months of full-time work to complete.

She will also show her Earth Angel and Sky Swimmer (mermaid). Both of these large pieces have eyes that light up.

"All these things are unseen—dragons, mermaids and angels," Shane said.

DRAGONS continued on **18 »**

Three Broadway Productions in One Weekend for LCA and Main Street Theatre

Chavaleh Forgey

Known for 13 years of family fun entertainment in Visalia, this year the League of Christian Actors Theater is not producing its usual summer production – this year there will be three.

Pulling from the off-Broadway Summer Stock concept, one group of versatile actors will perform three full-scale productions in one amazing weekend, June 25-28th: South Pacific, the Tony Award winning musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein, a story set in the islands during World War II; Godspell,

PRODUCTIONS continued on **24 »**

Seth Vazquez and Jamie Lucchesi break down cultural barriers as U.S. Navy Officer Joseph Cable and Liat the South Pacific Islander fall in love.

Artbeat and the Visalia Fox Present: Under The Streetlamp

Donna Orozco

Artbeat, Inc and the Visalia Fox Theatre are proud to close out their Lively Performance Series with America's hottest new vocal group, Under the Streetlamp, on June 27.

Under the Streetlamp performs an electrifying evening of classic hits from the American radio songbook. Exuding the irresistible rapport of a modern day Rat Pack, the quartet--recent leading cast members of the Tony Awardwinning musical Jersey Boys--deliver an evening of unforgettable entertainment. Doo-Wop, Motown, old-time Rock 'n' Roll and favorites from The Drifters, The Beach Boys, The Beatles all in a "show-stopping" salute to their mentors Frankie Valli and Bob Gaudio, the guys perform a medley from the "Four Seasons" catalog of outstanding hits.

Under The Streetlamp

Critics have called Under the Streetlamp "a surefire sellout!" All the songs are delivered in the inimitable Under the Streetlamp style, with tight harmonies and slick dance moves that will take you to back an era of sharkskin suits, flashy cars, and martini shakers.

Under the Streetlamp harmoniously blends the diverse talents of Michael Cunio, Michael Ingersoll, Christopher Kale Jones and Shonn Wiley. Together the group has filmed two PBS specials, recorded three albums, performed to packed houses throughout the U.S., and appeared as musical guests on TV's "Access Hollywood" and "Extra."

The four first met while performing in "Jersey Boys," during which time they also performed on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "The Primetime Emmys," and "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno."

Doors open at 6:30pm and the show begins at 7:30.

Visit Under The Streetlamp's website for information. To buy tickets visit the Visalia Fox Theatre website, www.foxvisalia.org or box office located at 308 W. Main St., Visalia, CA.

Dragons

Continued from p. 17

"Most of my ideas come from my childhood. As a child I fanaticized about being a mermaid. This is my adult manifestation of those things."

She will also display a large selection of gourds she grew herself that she has painted with a special technique she created to accentuate the colors. In addition, she will show her geckos, a dyed silk quilt and a painting of the Higgs Boson particle, an artistic rendering of the particle in quantum physics.

Shane has also made earrings out of gourd tiles as well as batik bags she will have for sale. All in all, this will be a very eclectic and interesting show.

Shane will show her unique art, which also includes gourds, batiks and paintings, at the Brandon-Mitchell Gallery, located in the Center for Spiritual Living (formerly the Spiritual Awareness Center) at 117 S. Locust, Visalia, in July and August.

Reception for Debbie Shane during the Downtown First Friday Art Walk, July 3 and August 7 from 5:30-8 pm. Shane will talk about her art at 6:15 pm.

The Brandon-Mitchell Gallery is also open Monday-Thursday from 9:30 am - 3:30 pm. Just ring the bell for admittance.

Great Conversations

By the People and for the People: Tocqueville's Democracy in America

Joseph R. Teller

In the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville traveled from his native France to the United States to study the American prison system. His nine-month stay in the United States ultimately became the impetus of his magisterial work, *Democracy in America* (published in two parts in 1835 and 1840).

This hefty volume is still the most comprehensive and insightful analysis of the American political psyche ever printed, and last week, the Great Books group discussed a lengthy excerpt from Tocqueville on the "advantages of American society" and the "Public Spirit in the United States."

According to Tocqueville, "Democratic laws tend to promote the welfare of the greatest possible number; for they emanate from the majority of the citizens, who are subject to error, but who cannot have an interest opposed to their own advantage.

"This form of government is predicated on what Tocqueville, drawing on the theories of John Stuart Mill, calls "disinterested patriotism," in which citizens have a stake in their government because it serves their self-interest.

Even if their legislators err, a democratic people will, over the long run, act in a way that promotes the greatest good for the greatest number.

For Tocqueville, it logically follows that the recognition and extension of personal rights (like rights to liberty and property) is vital to civil society in general: "there are no great nations—it may almost be added that there would be no society—without the notion of rights; for what is the condition of a mass of rational and intelligent beings who are only united together by the bond of force?"

Without the idea of rights and a government that serves personal interest, Tocqueville believes, the only alternative form of government is despotism, since citizens who are not bound by rights (or religious principles) can only be governed by force.

Tocqueville's observations of American democracy lead him to conclude that, "Democracy does not confer the most skillful kind of government upon the people, but it produces that which the most skillful governments are frequently unable to awaken, namely, an all-pervading and restless activity, a superabundant force, and an energy that is inseparable from it, and which may… beget the most amazing benefits."

Indeed, Tocqueville claims that if you want the "production of comfort" and "the acquirement of the necessities of life," "you can have no sure means of satisfying them, than by equalizing the conditions of men and establishing democratic institutions."

However, the benefits of democracy come at a cost: if you want to "confer a certain elevation upon the human mind," "to give birth to living convictions," "to cultivate the arts of a nation, and to promote the love of poetry, of beauty, and of renown," then "you must avoid the government of democracy."

American democracy, Tocqueville claims, produces material prosperity and civic participation, but does not encourage liberal learning or philosophical reflection.

Like most readers of *Democracy in America*, our group was impressed by Tocqueville's insights, and found much in him as true today as it was 180 years ago.

We were also fascinated by a provocative set of questions pertinent to each of us today: how might Tocqueville react to American democracy today?

Would he still believe that "disinterested patriotism" and "rational self-interest" are the soundest foundations of self-governance?

Would he still believe that democracy limits corruption much better than aristocracy?

Can democratic society produce and nurture a robust artistic, literary, and philosophical culture? Does the granting of political rights guarantee civic participation?

Do all Americans have a real stake in self-governance or a real say in what happens in our political system?

If not—then what?

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FoodLink Brings Chef Alli Sosna to Show How to Eat on $3.50 per Meal

Donna Orozco

Chef Alli Sosna, founder of MicroGreens Organization who appeared on "Chopped," a reality cooking TV show, is in Visalia, teaching school districts and community partners how to cook healthy for a family of four on $3.50 per meal. She concludes with a fundraiser for FoodLink, Tulare County on Friday, June 19.

With the Be Healthy Tulare and Young Men's Initiative, Chef Alli will work with community partners from all areas of Tulare County, teaching them food preparations and recipes using ingredients that are available from local food banks, preparing foods on a food stamp budget and empowering these leaders to go back to their own communities and teach others to do the same.

MicroGreens is a free after school program teaching how to shop and eat on $3.50 per meal for a family of four. MicroGreens was developed to help combat obesity in the U.S. and teach families how to enjoy healthy food on a budget. It has worked in Baltimore, Brooklyn and Washington, D.C.

"We are excited to have Chef Alli with us in Tulare County," said Sarah Ramirez, director of FoodLink. "Our work is linked to her organization MicroGreens in that we focus on educating community members to prepare healthy meals while being good stewards of food resources available and stretching their dollar. Alli's training will promote food waste reduction ideas because the food we'll enjoy will help us re-define and change our expectations of 'waste' and 'edible.' "

Chef Alli trained in Italy, worked in upscale Washington D.C. restaurants, and was executive chef in the D.C. Central Kitchen, where she realized her passion for providing the nation's youth with access to healthy food on a budget.

Her website www.microgreensproject.org says that 40 percent of our nation's food is wasted.

"Because our country focuses so much on 'perfect' produce, any dents, a cut (like an apple) or a little bruising (like a banana) is deemed not worth buying," said Alli. "Because 'ugly' fruits are unwanted, they often get wasted, turned away."

And that's just in grocery stores. "The average American family throws away up to $2,200 in food per household," said Alli. "That's a sad statistic, considering hunger in America. One in seven Americans, or about 46 million people, use food banks to get their food. Half of these American's are kids."

Chef Alli's technique is buying in volume.

"You pay for all the items up front and then stretch them," she said. "So, from one whole chicken you break it down (yes, butcher it) into what will become 12 servings total. The bulk carrots, onions, chicken and dried spices you buy end up turning into chicken soup, chicken stir fry and other chicken based dishes."

Chef Alli Sosna will conclude her week in Visalia by preparing dishes using imperfect produce (lovingly called "ugly fruit") at a "Just Eat It" fundraiser on Friday, June 19 from 6-9 p.m.

"Just Eat It!" will focus on raising funds for materials to help cover the week-long training that Be Healthy Tulare and FoodLink for Tulare County are offering to local school and community leaders.

"With all the recent exciting news of markets featuring imperfect foods, we are thrilled to create a public event that will feature imperfectly perfect produce," said Sarah Ramirez, director of FoodLink. "Even something that looks ugly and might be considered 'waste' in one context can have incredible flavor. Let's come together to create a healthier food system for all, support our farmers, and enjoy some delicious foods."

The event will include a meet and greet with Chef Alli, appetizers and small bites from imperfect fruits, and wine. Tickets are $100 per person and available at www.behealthytulare.com or call FoodLink at 652-3663.

Boys & Girls Club to Open in Strathmore

Staff Reports

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sequoias has opened a new club on in the Strathmore community. This will be the seventh community in Tulare County to have a Boys & Girls Club.

Tamie Mitchell, a concerned parent from the small community whose son was murdered in 2012 due to gang violence, approached the Club hoping to offer a safe place for kids to go to after school and during the summer.

"I wanted to give my son a voice so that his death was not in vain. We can use what happened to him to help save lives by educating families and youth on the devastating effects of gang violence," she said.

A small group of caring community members formed the Strathmore Community Action Team and has been working very hard during the last two years to raise funds for a Club. They will get to see their efforts come to fruition this next week.

"I have been working closely with this amazing group of people and admire their tenacity and drive to make their community a safer place, giving children a healthy alternative to life outside of gangs", said Lynn Dodds, Boys & Girls Clubs' director of development.

Grace Bible Fellowship Church, located across the street from the Strathmore Elementary School on Avenue 198, has opened their doors, allowing the Club to serve the kids in their community. A full curriculum will be offered focusing on the Club's three primary outcomes: Academic Success, Good Character & Citizenship and Healthy Lifestyles.

Field trips to the Sequoias, Porterville Olympic Day and swimming at local pools are several activities scheduled, and lunch will be provided at the school through the USDA lunch program.

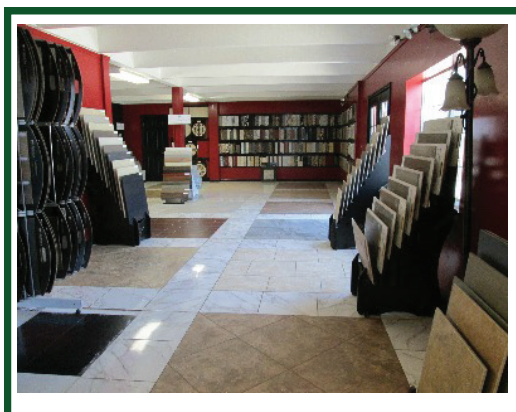
Gail Grasmick, retired Strathmore Elementary school teacher, understands the needs of the youth in this community, and has been working closely with the Boys & Girls Club staff.

"I am so excited to see the Club open and give our kids a place to go where they can discover and experience new opportunities in life," she said.

The Strathmore Club will be open Monday through Friday, from 10 am to 2 pm this summer, for kids ages 10 to 14, an age when youth are often first influenced by gang membership. The hours will change to 3 pm to 6 pm once school commences again for fall.

If you have a child or know of one that would like to become a member of the Strathmore Club or one of the other six Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Tulare County, call 592-4074 for an application. The membership fee is only $10 per year to make sure all kids in Strathmore are able to benefit from the Club's services. On average, it costs the Club $400 per year to provide services for one child.

If you would like to learn more about the Boys & Girls Club, become a volunteer, or donate to support and sustain the Strathmore Club, visit www.bgcsequoias.org.



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"The Endeavor for Peace," the third place winner in the Congressional Art Contest for the 23rd Disrict.

Art Award

Continued from p. 17

The other new thing Napoles encountered in high school was art instruction. Despite her love of drawing, until coming to RHS she'd never taken a class. When she did, she knew she'd found a place she belonged.

"I knew I wanted to get into art, but it wasn't until junior year I took a class," Napoles said. "I like the aliveness of it. Being around creative people is important to me."

It's so important, she plans to dedicate her professional life it. This fall, Napoles will begin classes at Long Beach State, where she will pursue a degree in art. Ultimately, she hopes to become an art teacher, a desire that came to her while in classes at RHS taught by Richardo Zavaleta.

Napoles is the daughter of Laura and Paul Napoles. The couple has two other daughters, Napoles's younger sisters Celeste and Salma.

Calendar

Every Third Tuesday, Monthly: The League of Women Voters of Tulare County meets, 11:45am
Enjoy lunch and a discussion at Sue Sa's Club House, 699 W. Center in Visalia. A fixed price luncheon for $13.00 inc. tax and tip will be served. The public is welcome. Reservations are required by calling 734-6501.

1st and 3rd Thursdays: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm
819 West Visalia Road, Farmersville.

June 8 through August: Oil Paintings by Betty Berk
This is a one-woman exhibit at Cafe 225. There will be a reception at 1pm on Sunday, June 14.

Every Tuesday through July 28: Sierra View Farmers Market, 9am–Noon
Join us at Sierra View Medical Center East Parking Lot, 465 W. Putnam Ave. in Porterville, for the NEW Sierra View Farmers Market, in partnership with the Visalia Farmer's Market! Come enjoy fresh local produce harvested for the summer season. Shoppers can buy local tomatoes, cucumber, zucchini, stone fruit, berries, citrus, plant starts, olives, honey, grass fed beef and more! The first 50 people to visit the Sierra View Medical Center Booth will receive Healthy Bucks to spend at the Market! Plus, you can receive a $10 Market Match when using Cal Fresh EBT Benefits! In addition, the Tulare Kings Area Agency on Aging will be joining us on June 9 and will be distributing $20 gift certificates for the farmers market to seniors who qualify. Local producers or non-profits interested in joining the Sierra View Farmers Market can apply at www.visaliafarmersmarket.com

Through June: Visalia Branch Library Teen Homework Center, 3-6:30pm
The Visalia Branch Library offers a place for teens to do their homework Tuesdays through Fridays. The library is located at 200 W. Oak St.

Through June: Tulare Public Library Homework Help
Homework help for children in grades K-12 will be available in the Tulare Public Library Learning Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-7pm and Saturdays from 1-4pm.

Through July 11: "New Artist/Old Soul" --Paintings by Anees Akhund.
At the Tulare Historical Museum's Heritage Art Gallery, 444 West Tulare Avenue in Tulare, Thursday--Saturday 10am to 4pm. $5 for Adults; $3 for Seniors 55+ & SoCal Automobile Club Members; $2 for Students; Free for Tulare City Historical Society Members and Children under 5. Admission to Heritage Art Gallery is free.

Through October 28: Free Fly Casting Instruction, 6-7pm
Kaweah Fly Fishers are offering fly casting lessons at Del Lago Park in Tulare every Wednesday evening until October 28. Rods and reels will be supplied or you may bring your own.

JUNE

June 18: Visalia Chamber of Commerce 2015 Annual Awards Celebration, 6-9:30pm
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce 2015 Annual Awards celebration honoring Man, Woman and Businesses of the Year will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. Tickets are $70.00 each or a table of 8 for $520.00

June 18-21: Wilderness Trip
White Chief Cave: the Underground Wilderness of Mineral King. Duration: 4 days. To register, call the Sequoia Field Institute at 559-565-4251

June 19: Visalia Teen Idol Auditions, 1-5pm
Audition packets for the 12th Annual Visalia Teen Idol Contest can be picked up now at the Visalia Parks & Recreation Business Office, located inside the Anthony Community Center, at 345 N. Jacob St. The Visalia Teen Idol Contest is a talent search for the best teen singer in Visalia. Youth ages 13 to 19, who live within the Visalia Unified School District Boundaries, are eligible to pick up an audition packet and tryout. There is no charge to try-out or to be in the Visalia Teen Idol contest, but packets must be completed and turned in at the time of tryout.

June 19: Concert in the Park 2015, 7pm
Listen to ROADHOUSE play Hanford Civic Park / Historic Courthouse Stage, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford. This is a free event. For more information, contact the Hanford Parks and Recreation Department at 585-2525.

June 19 to 28: Heritage of America
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host a "Travel with the Chamber" trip, which includes airfare, 14 meals and a professional travel guide. Destinations include New York, Philadelphia, Amish Country, Gettysburg, Shenandoah Valley, Monticello, Williamsburg, Mount Vernon, Washington, D.C. and the Smithsonian. For information, call 734-5876.

June 20: "How to Create and Sustain a Mystery Series," 10am-Noon
Tulare Kings Writers will meet in the Blue Room of the Tulare Public Library in Visalia from 10am to noon on June 20.Highlighting the meeting will be "How to Create and Sustain a Mystery Series," a presentation by Marilyn Meredith, aka F. M. Meredith, the author of two popular mystery series. Handouts will be available. Please bring your business cards, fliers, etc. for the networking part of the meeting, which starts at 11:30am.

June 21: Annual Helicopter Candy Drop, 1pm
Due to all local helicopters being needed to fight forest fires and other emergencies, we've been forced to move the annual Helicopter Candy Drop to Sunday, June 21. That game will now start at 1:00. This Sunday, Kids' Club members will be able to play catch on the field after the game.

June 22 to 26: Yellowstone National Park Wildlife Safari
The Sequoia Natural History Association (SNHA) will hold an eco-tour of Yellowstone National Park. Reserve seats by calling 565-4222. For information, visit sequoiahistory.org.

June 24: Miss Devon & the O**utlaw plus Krystyn Harris with Brook Wallace, 7pm**
This is a rare opportunity to catch two acts in one for the same price. We are confident you'll enjoy this evening of wonderful Western music by four talented Texans. Bring out the kids too as they'll be no school in the morning. Call Mavericks at 559 624-1400 for tickets (Visa/MC) or better yet stop by for a cup of their almost world famous, freshly roasted coffee. Limited seating, doors open at 6 (open seating) show time at 7 PM.

June 24: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Tulare Community Band's Patriotic & Military music on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

June 25: REO SPEEDWAGON, 7:30pm
At the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets $39-$89.Benefitting the Creative Center Foundation. Presented by CHOICES and Rainmaker Productions.

June 25-28th: One Weekend, Three Shows -- See Times
South Pacific, the Tony Award winning musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein (The Sound of Music, Oklahoma!) a story set in the islands during World War II; Godspell, a high-energy, thought-provoking look at the Gospel of Matthew written and recently re-imagined by Stephen Schwartz of "Wicked" fame; and a glamourous night of "Broadway at the Movies," featuring some of the best performers the Central Valley has to offer singing and dancing selections from their favorite cross-overs from stage to screen such as Hairspray, Chicago, Newsies, Grease, Hello Dolly, and many more. Tickets are $20 general, $16 students, or a three-show package for $45, are available by calling or texting 559-471-7814, by email at lcaproduction@yahoo.com, or online at eventbrite.com (search "League of Christian Actors" in Visalia, CA)

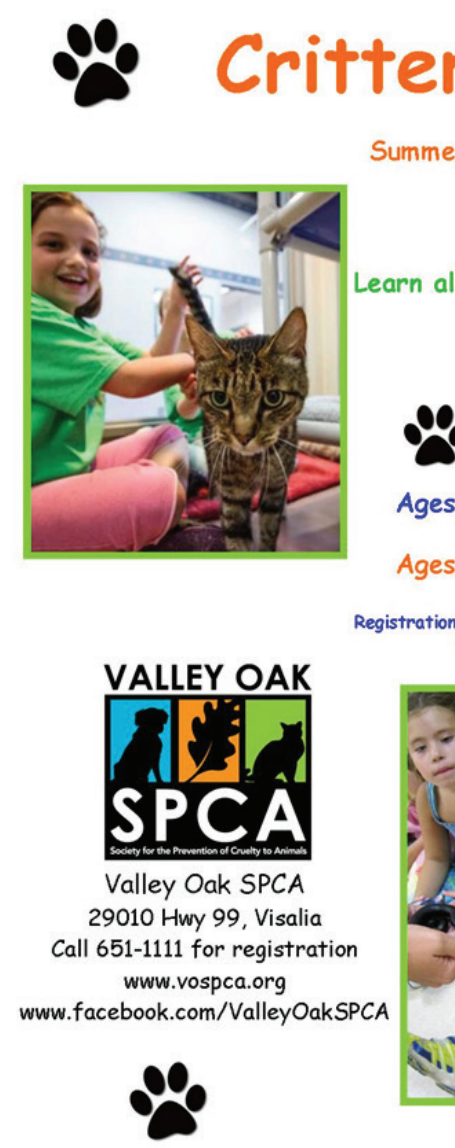
Broadway at the Movies: Thursday, June 25, 7pm and Sunday, June 28, 7pm
South Pacific: Friday, June 26, 7pm and Saturday, June 27, 2pm
Godspell: Saturday, June 27, 2pm and Sunday, June 28, 2pm

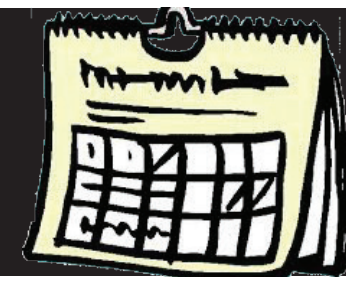
June 26: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9pm
Brothers from Another Mother

June 27: Tagus Ranch reunion, 10am-2pm
The reunion is a gathering of families who lived, worked, and/or went to school on Tagus Ranch during the early and mid-1900's.Others who are interested in this period of Tulare County history are also welcome. The event is at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia, Arbor 18. Bring potluck to join in the lunch. Please bring photos and memorabilia to share. This is an opportunity to see friends, make new ones, swap stories, and be part of oral history making. For more information, call Joan at 679-6015.

June 27: Under the Streetlamp, 7:30pm
The Streetlamp will perform favorite Doo-Wop, Motown and old-time rock n' roll hits at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 300 Main St. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

June 28: Catholic Church of Visalia's Blood Drive, 8:30am-1:30pm
Give the gift of life at the Catholic Church of Visalia's Blood Drive, at St. Mary's Parish Center 506 N. Garden St. in Visalia. All donors will receive t-shirts, will be served A & W root beer floats, and will be entered into a drawing to win a beach cruiser bike. They will also receive coupons for Dickies BBQ sandwiches and a choice of coupons from local businesses including bowling, The Habit, Goriilla Quesadilla, and more. Blood donation takes less than one hour to complete. Donors must be in good general health, weigh a minimum of 110 pounds and be at least 17 years old (16 years old with written parental consent). Donors should eat a good meal within 4 hours prior to their donation and drink plenty of water starting the evening before. Photo ID and Social Security Number are required at donor registration. Sponsored by The Women's Guild. If you have any questions, please call 288-6319.





June 29: Pizza with a Purpose, 5-9pm
Enjoy a great meal & support a great cause! Every #lastmonday of the month in 2015. The Planing Mill will donate a portion of the evening's revenue to the VRM!

June 29-July 20: Center Stage Strings - Music Festival & Camp
You are invited to beautiful Three Rivers, CA anytime - but especially this summer, from June 29 to July 20, for fabulous concerts provided by guest artists, staff and students, during Center Stage Strings camp for young string virtuosos. Over the span of these 3 weeks, you will hear young budding artists and already world class performers as they study, rehearse and perform courtesy of Center Stage Strings, founded by Artistic Director and prize-winning concert violinist Danielle Belen of Los Angeles. Danielle will perform alongside her

Center Stage Strings colleagues for some very special concerts and we will also be treated to other very special concerts by amazing visiting artists. You just don't want to miss any of these concerts, let alone the chance to see and hear some of the biggest young stars in classical music! Info: http://www.centerstagestrings.com/

JULY

July 1: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to see J.E.R.K.'s variety show on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

July 4: Lemoore July 4th Celebration/ Firecracker 5k Run
For information call 924-6767.

July 4: Exeter 4th of July
Experience Exeter's "Small Town Charm" as we celebrate Independence Day. Activities in the Exeter City Park will include a 10K Run and Horseshoe Tournament. To sign up for the run or tournament call Exeter Community Services at 559-592-5262. Of course, no Fourth of July would be complete without fireworks! The Exeter Lion's Club invites you to come and enjoy their spectacular FREE fireworks show, beginning at dusk on July 4th at Lions Stadium on Rocky Hill Drive. Info: 559-592-2919

July 7-10: Christy Wood's Summer Horse Kamp.
Looking for something to keep the children busy during the day? Christy's Horse Kamp Level 1 includes instruction in leading and grooming, feeding and care, saddling and bridling, and riding. Level 2 includes lunging, obstacles and riding all 3 gaits. Both levels are taught by judge, instructor, trainer, champion and author Christy Wood at Wood 'N' Horse Training Stables, located at 42846 North Fork Drive in Three Rivers, CA. Call 559-561-4268 to register.

July 8: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Bruthas of Anutha Mutha's Rock, Blues & R&B on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

July 10: Concert in the Park 2015, 7pm
Listen to JJ Brown play Hanford Civic Park / Historic Courthouse Stage, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford. This is a free event. For more information, contact the Hanford Parks and Recreation Department at 585-2525.

July 10: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9pm
Richard Frost & Marco

July 11: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.

Jul 11: 5th annual Kids Day at Coe Park, 4:30-8pm
Come out and join us for the 5th annual Kids Day event at Coe Park,543 S. Douty St. in Hanford. Free for everyone. Call Graciela Davis at (559) 572-4435 for more information.

July 12: Hot Dog Festival & Craft Show, 10am-4pm
This annual event at the Three Rivers Museum supports the Three Rivers Volunteer Firefighters and the Museum. It runs from 10am to 4pm with demonstrations by Tulare County Fire, Cal Fire, and the National Park Service Fire. Lunch includes hot dogs with all the fixings, corn on the cob, and A&W root beer float. For more information: www.3rmuseum.org.

July 12: Martina McBride: The Everlasting Tour, 7:30-9:30pm
Martina McBride returns to the Visalia Fox Theatre! A Rainmaker Productions event benefitting VRM. Tickets available vrmhope.org/events

July 15: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Tule British Brass Band's Traditional music on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

July 18: Bowling for PADS, 12-3pm
At AMF Visalia Lanes, 1740 West Caldwell in Visalia. Donation is $125 for a five-person team. All ages are allowed. All proceeds go to Porterville Adult Day Services.

July 19: 7th Annual Food Fight AGAINST Hunger, 3-6pm
Join the California Restaurant Association as they host the 7th Annual Food Fight AGAINST Hunger! All proceeds benefit the Visalia Rescue Mission. PRIZES! DELICIOUS food from local restaurants! LIVE MUSIC! COOKING DEMO by The Vintage Press' David Vartanian! AMATEUR CHEFS COMPETING FOR TOP HONORS in the cooking competitions! Must be 21 to attend. Visit www.vrmhope.org/events for ticket information.

July 22: Labor Law Compliance Series, 7-10am.
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with Pacific Employers, will present the state-mandated Supervisors' Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Seminar & Workshop at the Lamp Liter Inn. Registration & Breakfast 7:30-8 am; Seminar 8-10am. Reservations required. For more information call the Chamber, 734-5876.

July 24: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9pm
The Beach Band

July 24-27: Wilderness Trip: Alta Peak.
Location: Lodgepole. Duration: 4 days. To register, call the Sequoia Field Institute at 559-565-4251.

July 25: 2nd Annual Peter Murphy Classic
King of the West 410, Sprint Car Series, USAC West Coast 360 Sprints and Western RaceSaver Sprints will be held at Thunderbowl Raceway at Tulare Fairgrounds. For information, visit www.thunderbowlraceway.com.

July 25-27: Dark Sky Festival
Throughout Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. Programs and activities include: Meet an Astronaut, Constellation Tours, Telescope Viewing, Special Film Viewing, Guest Speakers, Photography, Storytelling, Model Rocket Building, Home Lighting Demos and more. For more information, visit www.sequoiahistory.org/darksky

July 27: Pizza with a Purpose, 5-9pm
Enjoy a great meal & support a great cause! Every #lastmonday of the month in 2015. The Planing Mill will donate a portion of the evening's revenue to the VRM!

July 29: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Richard Frost, Marco Rodriguez & Billy's Country music on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

July 31: Concert in the Park 2015, 7pm
Listen to Conjunto Sagrado play Hanford Civic Park / Historic Courthouse Stage, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford. This is a free event. For more information, contact the Hanford Parks and Recreation Department at 585-2525.

August 7: The 27th Annual Tommy Elliott Memorial Golf Classic, 7am-3pm
Come join us for a day of golf, goodies, and giving during the 27th Annual Tommy Elliott Memorial Golf Classic on Friday, August 7, 2015 at the Visalia Country Club. Proceeds will go to funding Delivering Our Future project which will create a state-of-the art birthing center at the Kaweah Delta Medical Center. Registration 9am. Shotgun start 2:30pm. Awards Ceremony, Silent Auction, BBQ. $175.00 per golfer Sponsorships available. For more information call Deborah Volosin Kaweah Delta Hospital Foundation (559) 624-2359.

August 7: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9pm
Brad Wilson

August 8: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.

August 14: Concert in the Park 2015, 7pm
Listen to PSYCHE 5 play Hanford Civic Park / Historic Courthouse Stage, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford. This is a free event. For more information, contact the Hanford Parks and Recreation Department at 585-2525.

August 21: 6th Annual Golf Skills Challenge, 7:30am
At Valley Oaks Golf Course. 7:30am Registration, 9:00am Tee-off. TOURNAMENT STYLE: There will be a 9-hole regular course AND a 9-hole skills challenge course. Prizes will be awarded to challenge winners throughout the day.

August 21: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9pm
Mighty Oaks Chorus

August 31: Pizza with a Purpose, 5-9pm
Enjoy a great meal & support a great cause! Every #lastmonday of the month in 2015. The Planing Mill will donate a portion of the evening's revenue to the VRM!

Sports

Rawhide Pitchers Find Strike Zone

Stefan Barros

Coming off a breakthrough season in 2014, in which the Visalia Rawhide made it all the way to the California championship, the team is off to a hot start here in 2015.

This version of the Visalia Rawhide can thank their deep and talented pitching staff as a big reason for their success thus far. Pitching coach and former Major League pitcher Gil Heredia believes that this group's ability to throw strikes consistently is the main reason for the pitching staff's success, even compared to last year's staff that struggled a bit with command.

"I knew coming into the season we had good arms, but if they wanted to be successful they'd have to command the strike zone and throw strikes," he said. "These guys also haven't been pitching like their scared. They've been free and easy and relying on their stuff. Last year we had guys that struggled to throw strikes consistently."

Heredia gives the credit to the players on the field.

"Johnny Omahen has been a standout," Heredia said. "He was with us last year. Difference this year is that he's competing and trusting his stuff.

"Anthony Banda has gone through a rollercoaster this season. He's a left-hander, and he thinks like a left-hander. He was definitely surprise for us during spring training."

Heredia continued to name off the pitchers that have made an impact this year, including a couple more that will be California League All-Stars.

"Zach Godley has been one of our best pitchers so far, coming over the Cubs organization," he said. "He'll be an All-Star. Nick Sarianides will also be a Cal League All-Star and he's really put his name out there."

Heredia doesn't see his past Major League experience as a factor in the success of his pitching staff so far this season.

"I've been in their shoes in the way of ups and downs and the peaks and valleys that pitchers go through," he said. "I only hope that they can get to that level. In reality, Major League experience doesn't make for success as a coach. The success this year is on the players, and fact that we've had healthy arms in the bullpen, and the starting rotation. But it doesn't hurt to have that experience as a coach. It just gives accreditation and accountability to the situation."

Godley, has been the ace of the Rawhide starting staff so far.

"I really didn't know what to expect coming into this season, being with a new team, and it being my first year starting in the minors, Godley said. "But the defense has made some great plays behind and has kept me in a lot of games."

Godley also talked about his goals for the rest of this season, and whether or not he focuses on being promoted later on this season

"To go up in the pro ball is always a goal, but I just want to keep competing," he said. "I really love the team aspect of the game. I played college ball and the team aspect is really big down there. People aren't out there for themselves, these are all team guys."

Expanding on the fact that Godley pitched in college, at the University of Tennessee, he talked about the difference in competition between the college and minor league levels.

"I haven't played on a team in the minor leagues where it was every player for himself," he said. "It's a real team aspect up here as well. I had the same mindset pitching in college."

Heredia brought up the fact that his pitching staff has great chemistry, and is a tight knit group of players.

"All of the pitchers are very close with each other," he said. "They all pull for each other."

Four Rawhide Players Selected to Cal League All-Star Roster

Staff Reports

Rosters for the California-Carolina League All-Star game have been announced and they feature 4 Rawhide players: Zack Godley, John Omahen, Nick Sarianides, and Daniel Palka.

Godley has been among the league-leaders in multiple pitching categories this year; he won his first 6 starts, and the Rawhide won his first 8. His 1.99 ERA is the best on the circuit.

Omahen has been a remarkably consistent member of the Rawhide rotation, allowing 2 earned runs or fewer in 9 of his 11 starts. He has limited the opposition to a .211 batting average.

Sarianides, who was signed by the Diamondbacks out of independent ball, has been a dominant presence out of the Rawhide bullpen, recording 35 strikeouts in 22 innings, while holding opposing batters to a miniscule .160 average.

Zach Godley

John Omahen

Nick Sarianides

Daniel Palka

Palka has helped key the Rawhide offensive attack; he batted .306 with a .373 on-base percentage in May, while playing strong defense in right field. He made headlines by collecting 3 hits in 4 consecutive games from May 17-20.

Other California League team members are represented with four members of the Rancho Cucamonga Quakes, five players from the San Jose Giants, three players each from Modesto Nuts and Lancaster JetHawks, and one each from Bakersfield Blaze, Stockton Ports, Lake Elsinore Storm and Inland Empire 66ers. Coaching will be performed by the Quakes coaching staff.

The Cal-Carolina League All-Star Game will be played on Tuesday, June 23 in Rancho Cucamonga with first pitch scheduled for 7:35 pm.

The game can be heard live on Fox Sports AM 1350, through the Quakes' website or on an iHEART radio smartphone app.

South Valley Football All Stars to Play One Last Game

Staff Reports

It may seem a bit out of season, but some graduates still have one more high school football game to play.

Top players from around the South Valley have been named to the 48th Annual Tulare-Kings All Star Football game to be held Saturday, June 27 at Golden West High's Groppetti Stadium in Visalia.

This year's coaches, Mason Hughes from Central Valley Christian in Visalia, and Shannon Pulliam from Lemoore High, along with their staff, have chosen the best of the best graduating seniors to play on their teams and hopefully win this year's title.

Both coaches expressed their admiration for the players on their teams, and for the opportunity to work with some of their own players one last time as well as those from other schools, whom they have watched play.

Despite high thermometer readings, the two teams started practice this week with a mandatory 10 days of practice before the game.

Hughes' CVC team had a record of 11-2 this past year in the Central Sequoia League, Division IV. He is excited about coaching the East team.

"Generally, we will want to make sure we get in shape and that everyone learns the plays," Hughes said. "We want them to feel confident in what they are doing."

Pulliam's Lemoore team won the West Yosemite League in Division II and had a record of 11-1. He said he is honored to lead the West team.

"It's good to get to know these kids personally," he said. "It's kind of a nice closing and it's fitting."

Some of the players may go on to play college ball, and/or hope for a chance in professional ball. Some are just happy to play one last game.

This rivalry has been going on for close to 50 years in the South Valley and is organized by Visalia Optimists and Kiwanis of Lemoore members.

Both clubs continually produce the game and award sponsors to graduating seniors of area high schools.

Tickets to the game are $10; $5 for children 12 and under. Golden West High School is located at 1717 N. McAuliff in Visalia. Kickoff is at 8pm. Concession stands will be open.

For more information, call (559) 707-4876 or (559) 303-8953.

EAST

	Player Name	Position	High School
1	Chavez, Isiah	DB	Orosi High
3	Lee, Josh	OLB	Robert F. Kennedy
4	Arronda, Rolando	RB	Robert F. Kennedy
5	Vander Dussen, Brady	DB	Central Valley Christian
7	Metcalf, Sam	QB	Farmersville High
8	White, Sheldon	RB	Golden West
9	Navarro, Chris	DB	Lindsay High
11	Nelson, Tate	LB	Central Valley Christian
15	De La Cruz, Joseph	WR	Farmersville High
16	Nava, Michael	QB	Cesar F. Chavez
18	Nunez, Leo	TE	Golden West
20	Jordan, Malcom	DB	Cesar F. Chavez
22	Garcia, Rickie	WR	Redwood High
23	Kullck, John	LB	Woodlake High
24	Garbani, Mac	RB	Central Valley Christian
25	Rivera, Robert	RB	Delano High
26	Castro, Eduardo	DB	Strathmore High
28	Arreola, Rueben	DB	Granite Hills
33	te Velde, Alex	LB	Central Valley Christian
42	Looney, Joseph	DL	Mt. Whitney
47	Williams, Jesse	LB	Redwood High
50	Reistma, Christian	OL	Redwood High
51	Estrada, Eliseo	OL	Cesar F. Chavez
52	Estrada, Josh	DL	Robert F. Kennedy
54	Magana, Juan	OL	Monache High
55	Maniss, Drew	OL	Porterville High
56	Zwart, Caleb	OL	Central Valley Christian
58	Maldonado, Gabriel	DL	MacFarland High
62	Bouwman, Jake	OL	Central Valley Christian
71	Sahagun, Ryan	OL	Monache High
74	Ruiz, Vincent	OL	Monache High
77	Rowley, Derk	DL	Golden West
85	Babagian, Steven	TE	El Diamante
89	Taylor, Rex	LB	Porterville High
99	De Haan, Jake	DL	Central Valley Christian

WEST

	Player Name	Position	High School
1	Martinho, Daniel	DB	Tulare Western
2	Padilla, Jordan	WR/DB	Tulare Western
3	Douglas, Justin	RB/DB	Coalinga High
4	Groathouse, Cort	QB	Lemoore High
5	Rodriguez, Isaiah	OLB	Lemoore High
7	Kaczynski, Coleman	DL	Hanford High
8	Hunt, Nate	OL/DL	Hanford High
10	Portillo, Kobe	QB	Tulare Western
11	Dias, Brock	WR/DB	Mission Oak
12	Portillo, Nico	QB/DB	Corcoran High
13	Plemons, Trent	WR/DB	Kingsburg High
15	Ybarra, Ricky	WR/DB	Corcoran High
16	Love, Christian	WR/OLB	Tulare Union
17	Overmyer, Karson	WR/DB	Lemoore High
20	Robinson, Josh	QB/DB	Kings Christian
21	Rico, Jacob	RB/DB	Dinuba High
22	Tripp, Koby	WR/DB	Mission Oak
24	Garrison, Hunter	DB	Dinuba High
32	Johnson, Tim	ILB	Lemoore High
44	Gomes, Brian	ILB/OLB	Tulare Union
47	Dawuud, Davis	DL	Dinuba High
50	Briseno, Marc	DL/LB	Tulare Union
51	Cortes, Omar	OL	Avenal High
52	Hunt, Jayden	OL/DL	Lemoore High
54	Conklin, Chandler	ILB	Dinuba High
55	Cole, Matt	OL/DL	Lemoore High
56	Prudthomme, Vincent	OL	Hanford West
60	Gonzalez, Raul	DL	Dinuba High
61	Sandoval, Julian	DL	Coalinga High
66	Swearingin, Tyler	DL	Riverdale High
71	Rico, Rafael	OL	Coalinga High
72	Flippen, Josh	OL	Hanford High
75	Frazier, Zack	DL	Lemoore High
77	Stenchski, Anthony	OL/DL	Sierra Pacific
91	Aguilar, Andy	OLB	Mission Oak

WHCC's Jacob Lees Heading to College National Finals Rodeo

Staff Reports

After finishing in the top three at April's National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association West Coast Region finals, West Hills College Coalinga's Jacob Lees is competing in NIRA's National Finals Rodeo.

Lees is competing in Bareback Riding at the finals from June 14 to June 20 in Casper, Wyoming.

"WHCC Rodeo is very proud of Jacob and his accomplishments this year," said WHCC Rodeo Coach Justin Hampton. "He finished the regular season with a riding percentage of 80 percent, which is phenomenal. He is very deserving of this opportunity and we are looking forward to great things from him."

Lees has been a member of the WHCC rodeo team since the fall of 2014, but has competed in rodeo since he was a freshman in high school. He is the only team member to advance this year.

"I feel like this is a critical opportunity and I'm honored to be able to go," Lees said.

Originally from Idaho, Lees grew up in the area of Nipomo, California and graduated from Arroyo Grande High School.

WHCC Student Braxton Lorenzini Recruited by San Diego Padres

Staff Reports

It means a shot at the big leagues for West Hills College Coalinga student Braxton Lorenzini.

Lorenzini, a right handed pitcher who played the 2015 season with the Falcons baseball team, has signed with the San Diego Padres and will likely start on their rookie affiliate.

He was a 33rd round draft pick, number 987 overall.

"As much as it's sad to see him leave the program, I am very happy for Braxton and wish him nothing but success," said Falcons baseball coach Stefan McGovern.

"I know that having him drafted tells us that we're bringing in the right type of players into our program and will also help us with future recruiting."

In the 2015 season, Lorenzini posted a 1-7 win loss record with the Falcons and a 4.30 ERA.

He was in the top 5 in the Central Valley Conference in strikeouts averaging nearly one strikeout per inning pitched.

He joined the WHCC team after transferring from Central Christian College in Kansas following a medical hardship waiver.

He attended WHCC from August 2014 to May 2015.

NorCal Little League Tourney Coming to Exeter

Nancy Vigran

Batter Up in Exeter during July for the 9-10 year-old bracket Northern California Regional finals to be held the last week in July.

For nearly 50 years, young ballplayers have been competing in Little League in the South Valley. California District 34 encompasses Tulare and Kings counties and is part of the NorCal Division, which runs from Bakersfield to the Oregon border.

Each year, each age bracket has district finals throughout the area. But division championships, which are rotated throughout the NorCal area, are far less frequent to have on home field, let alone a small community such as Exeter, said Josh Rowlett, president of District 34.

It was Exeter's "turn" to host the District 9-10 finals, but when the opportunity to host the Division finals came up, Rowlett did not hesitate.

"It's great for the local economy and visitors get to see life in a small town atmosphere," he said.

Each team average 13-14 members, and eight teams will participate, making for close to 200 players and all of their families moving into Exeter and the surrounding area, July 25 – August 1.

"Some players travel with quite an entourage," Rowlett said. "And they will all need to eat someplace, stay someplace and gas up."

Another highlight to Exeter's hosting the event is that, in a rare approval by the division board, Exeter's 9-10 team, as host team, received an "advance without play." This means the Exeter team (which Rowlett coaches) will get to play in the regional finals, whether they win District or not.

This also means that there is an opportunity for two local teams to play in the Regional finals.

Meanwhile, local teams in all age divisions are participating in District 34 tournament finals. Intermediate Division for ages 11-13, are just wrapping up their tourney in Visalia, the results of which were not known at press time.

Other District 34 tournaments include: eight-year-olds in Corcoran, nine-year-olds in Corcoran; 9-10s in Exeter, 10-11s in Lemoore, 11-12 in Porterville, and Juniors (ages 13-14) in Porterville.

A Visalia Senior team, ages 15-16, is already advancing to the sectional. This year, the district has just two teams in this field. The Big League (ages 17-18) also has only two teams in the District and this is the first year with this age group, and their tournament location is yet to be determined.

Winning teams from District 34 will move on to sectional play and those tourney winners advance to the Divisional tournaments.

Northern California has 31 districts, divided into seven sections, which encompasses roughly 350 leagues, said Rodney M. Blaco, district administrator for California District 34.

"Teams getting to the State Tournament is quite an accomplishment," Blaco said. "Just two percent of leagues qualify to play in Northern California State Tournament.

Exeter Little League is still seeking sponsorships for the upcoming 9-10 NorCal Tournament, although the community has already really rallied for the event, Rowlett said.

"We've been very fortunate," he said. "The community has stepped up with the regular season and that carries into the tournament."

Spectators are welcome to watch the tournament to be played at Dobson Field.

"There will be some wonderful ball players coming in," Rowlett said. "I mean, they are only 10, but they play amazing ball."

For more information on District 34, contact Rodney M. Blaco, 408-646-7636. For more information regarding the Exeter 9-10 NorCal Tournament or Exeter Little League, call Josh Rowlett, 559-697-7140.

High School Nation to Award One School the Prom Of a Lifetime

Staff Reports

High School Nation (HSN) has announced that the Spring, 2015 installment of the High School Nation Tour included an exclusive contest for the 25 campuses HSN visited.

The program, known for always providing their services to schools at no cost, has added: throwing a blow out epic prom to their repertoire.

Ten schools have been selected as finalists for the contest, which pits the principals of each school against each other to try and win the coveted prize of a free prom for their school in 2016.

"You can really tell how much they care about their students from their willingness to go all out with their dance moves in front of so many teachers and teens," said Jimmy Cantillon, founder of High School Nation.

Since the video and contest launched one week ago, there have already been over 75,000 votes cast.

"We have some fun surprises in store for our winner," Cantillon added.

"It will include a few special guest performers, and some really memorable moments. We can't wait to see their reactions."

The 10 finalists include Tulare Union High School and Hanford High School. All principals were filmed during HSN's visit to their campus earlier this spring. Voting is open until Sunday, June 21, 2015, and you can check out the video and vote for your favorite dancer at: www.highschoolnation.org

During the past 10 years High School Nation has become the country's largest high school touring agency. HSN gives exposure to up-and-coming artists, as well as provides students with free entertainment at a time when funding for the arts has been severely cut nationwide.

In 2014 the HSN Tour donated $500,000 worth of musical equipment and art supplies to school music & arts programs.

For more information, call Jimmy Cantillon or Kevin Cantillon (310) 734-6527, or visit www.highschoolnation.org

Productions

Continued from p. 17

a high-energy, thought provoking look at the Gospel of Matthew written and recently re-imagined by Stephen Schwartz of "Wicked" fame; and a glamourous night of "Broadway at the Movies," featuring some of the best performers the Central Valley has to offer singing and dancing selections from their favorite cross-overs from stage to screen such as Hairspray, Chicago, Newsies, Grease, Hello Dolly and many more.

"The right venue was needed for the quick-change character of this summer, and we found it at the Main Street Theatre," says LCA founder Lim Forgey.

The audience's experience will begin even before they enter the lobby, transporting families into the world of each show like the entrance to a Disneyland ride – but without the long lines and huge expense.

Family is emphasized not only in LCA casts but in the choices of musical production. "Godspell" has a powerful message of hope and unity, "South Pacific" is loads of fun but has thought provoking moments dealing with real values and prejudice, and "Broadway at the Movies" is a nonstop romp through some of Broadway's most high-energy songs and production numbers which will keep the youngest to oldest members of any family on the edge of their seats.

There are almost a hundred actors in this summer season, but some notable talents are Steven Braswell and Seth Vasquez playing Jesus and Judas in Godspell and Felicity Brophy as Nellie in South Pacific. Community favorites Ali Malingen and Joe Harding, and new to LCA Katie Veale and Nicole Griffiths shine in the "Broadway at the Movies" production. Haleigh Cook returns from NYC to perform in Broadway at the Movies and LCA Producer Lim Forgey also moves from his usual opera and oratorio work to play Emil in South Pacific.

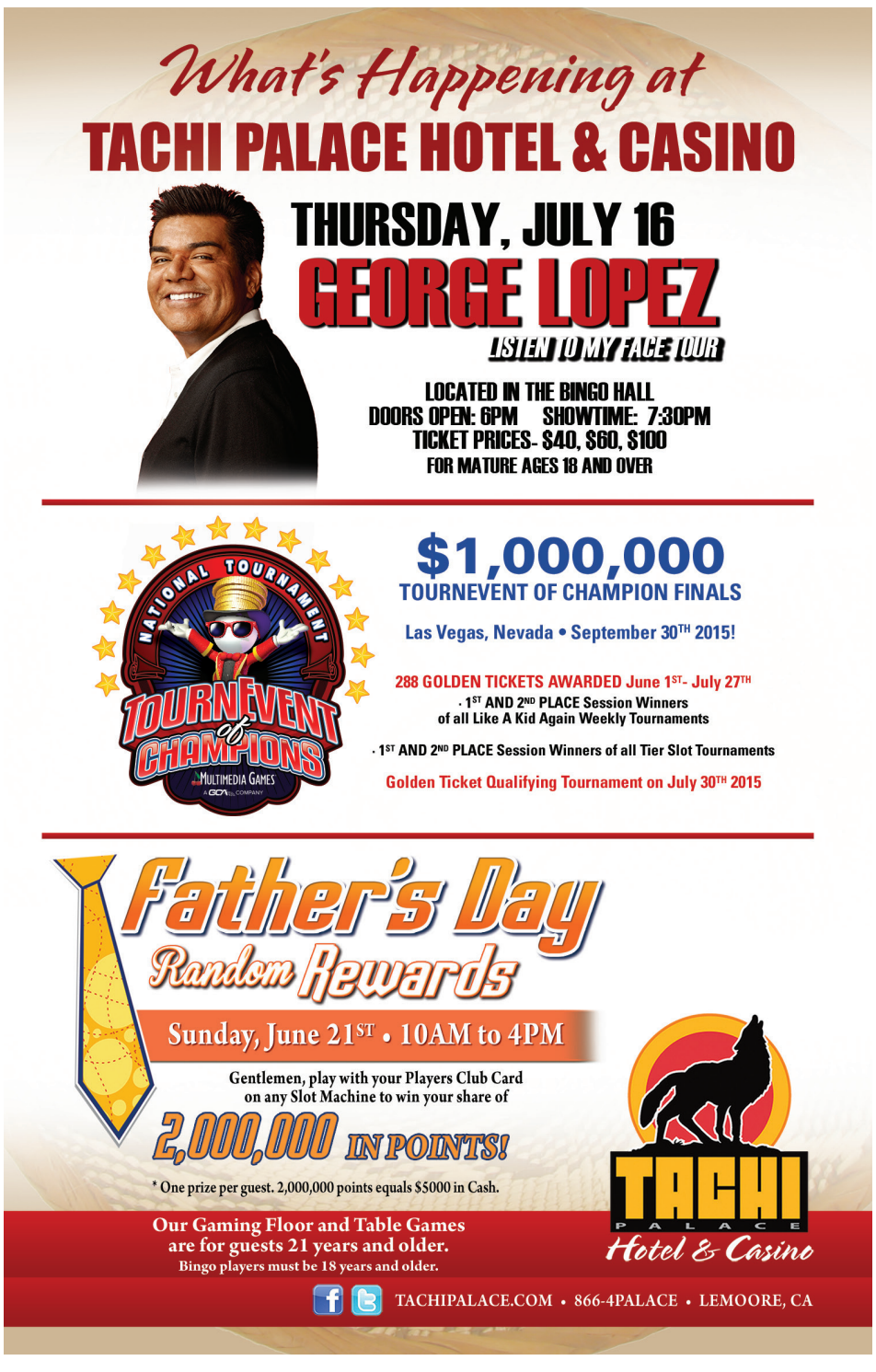
"We believe in local talent," says LCA choreographer Rachel Thompson. "The caliber of our shows has been raised by having so many amazing performers from right here in the Valley."

LCA productions continue to attract actors from around the Valley, commuting from as far as Fresno and Bakersfield to be part of Visalia's theater scene.

As always, the goal of the LCA Theater, a ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, is to bring family-friendly entertainment to our community. Each production will capture the audiences' imaginations and pull them into the experience together.

"Seeing live theater is important for families," says Junior Company member Megan who performs with her two younger siblings. "It gives them a chance to experience a new world together that they wouldn't otherwise see, and this brings them closer together."

The performances of Broadway at the Movies are Thursday, June 25, 7pm and Sunday, June 28, 7pm. The performances of South Pacific are Friday, June 26, 7pm and Saturday, June 27, 2pm. And the performances of Godspell are Saturday, June 27, 2pm and Sunday, June 28, 2pm.

Main Street Theatre is located at 307 E. Main St. Visalia and is also known as the Enchanted Playhouse.

Tickets for each show are $20 general, $16 students, or a three-show package for $45. Tickets available by calling or texting 559-471-7814, by email at lcaproduction@yahoo.com, or online at eventbrite.com (search "League of Christian Actors" in Visalia, CA).